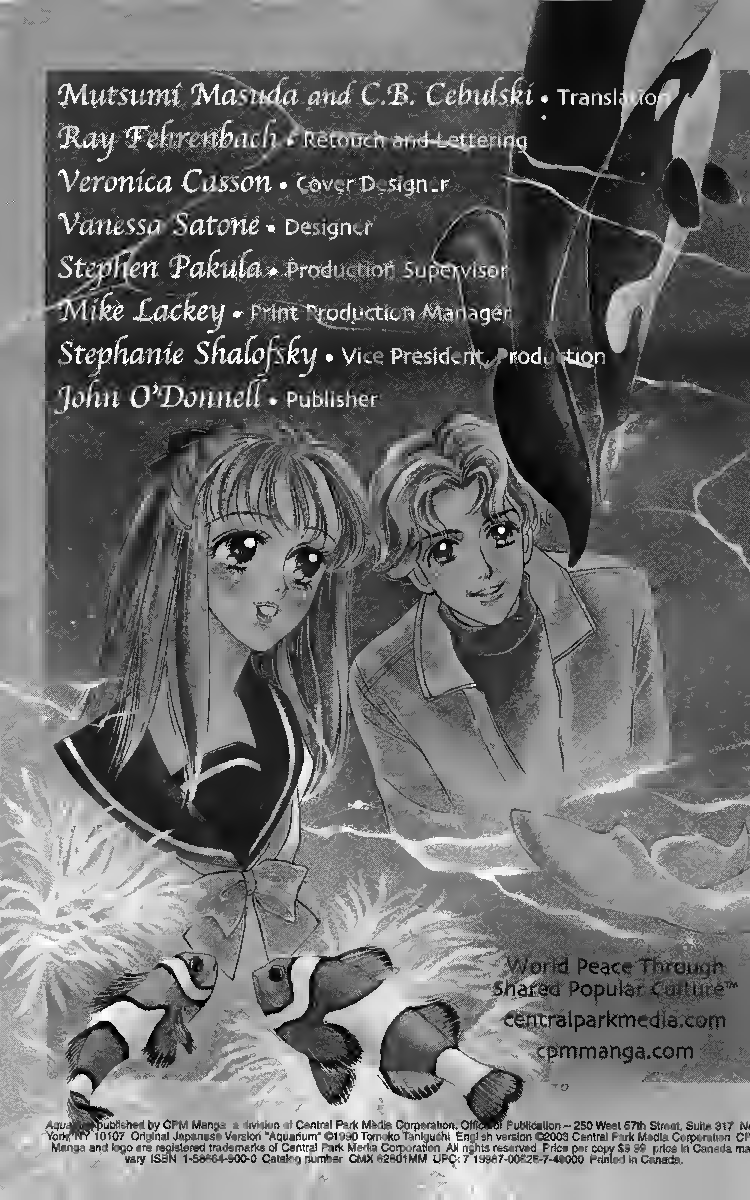
AQUARIUM

By **Tomoko Taniguchi**

"intriguing, powerful, ond thought-provoking"
—SequentialTart.com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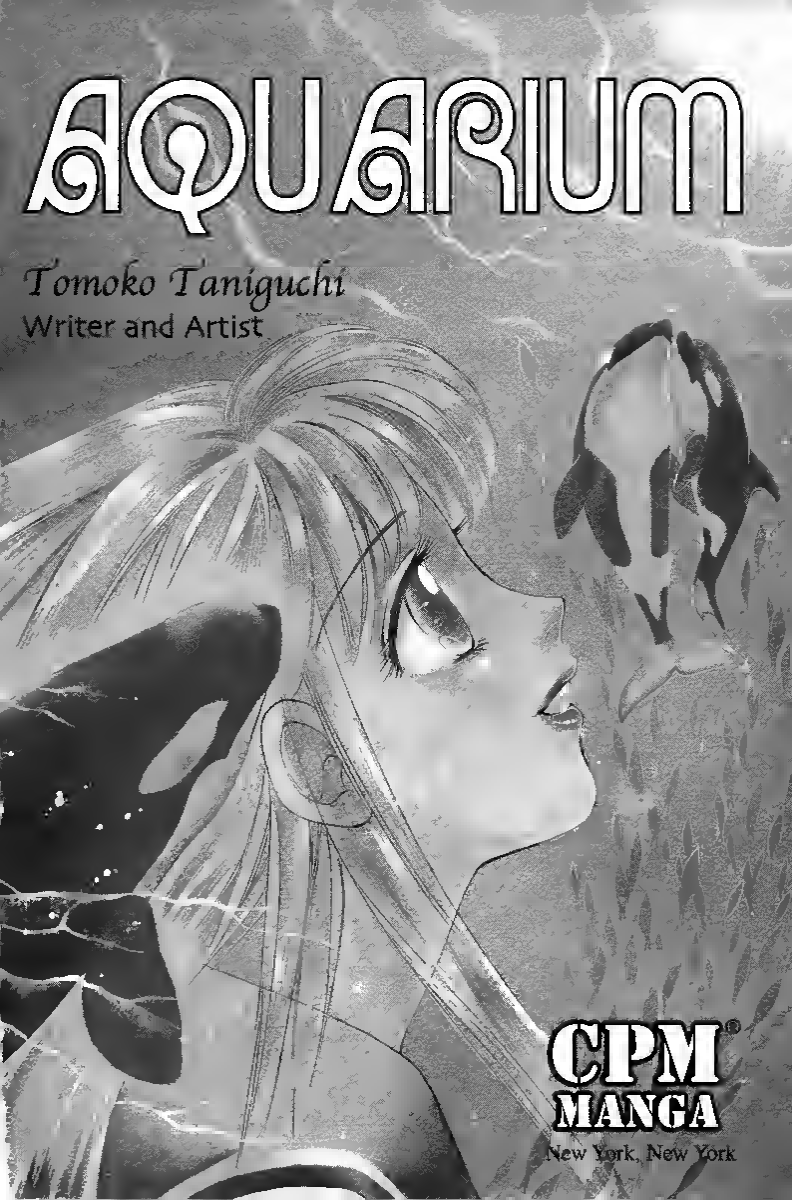
AQUARIUM

Tomoko Taniguchi
Writer and Artist



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CHARACTER PROFILES

AQUARIUM

Naoka Uchiyama

Things have not gone Naoka's way. She didn't get into the high school of her choice and has to wear a uniform that looks like it's for little girls. Her only solace is at the Aquarium, where she loses herself amongst the exotic fish.

Haruki Usami

Haruki likes to go to the Aquarium too...that's where he meets Naoka. Perhaps he can help to ease the pain in her heart.

THE FLYING STEWARDESS

Shoko Aoki
She's a new stewardess whose work has brought her all over Japan...but there seems to be something missing in her life.

Egawa
A face from Shoko's past, could Egawa be the key to Shoko's emptiness?

THE HEART IS YOUR KINGDOM

Matsushita
When she was young, she was told that her heart is a kingdom in which God dwells, but recently her faith has been shaken. Will she find what she believes has been lost?

Suzuki
Matsushita's childhood friend was told the same thing when he was younger. He's been the object of Matsushita's affections for years, but she has never told him so. Will he ever discover the truth?

THIS TIME OF YEAR, WE'RE ALL SUPPOSED TO BE HAPPY, WEARING NEW SCHOOL UNIFORMS, ONES WHICH WE'RE UNACCUSTOMED TO.
I'M THE ONLY ONE HIDING MINE UNDER MY COAT.
BUT IT'S GETTING WARMER, WITH THE SUNLIGHT SHINING DOWN ON US.

THAT UNIFORM...
OKAY, SEE YOU.
SEE YOU LATER.
THE ONE I HAVE BEEN LONGING TO WEAR... I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN ONE NOW, BUT--
--HERE I AM WEARING THIS TYPICAL, PLAIN, OLD, SAILOR UNIFORM.

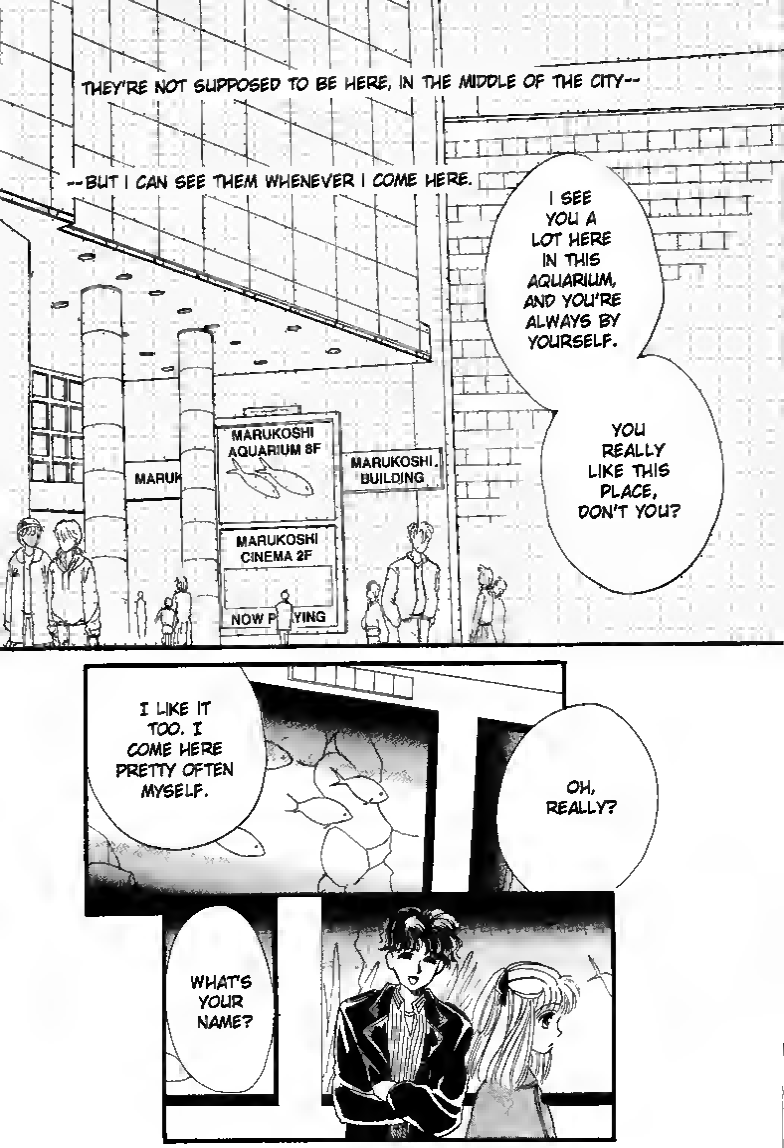
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
SATOSHI AKIBA
KENJI SATO
ATSUKO SUYAMA
NAOKO TAKEYAMA
EMI TSUKUMIMA
YUMIKO TOGAWA
TOMOKO NISHIYAMA
MINORU ISHIDA
YUTAKA SUZUKI
KAZUCHI SUTOMA
MICHIMA TAKEDA
NORIKO TSUYAMA
KATSUMI NAKAGAWA
KOICHI NATA
MITSURU NUMAMI
SHINTARO HARUDA
SHEMI HIROKAWA
AKIHIRO HORITA
SOUJI HIKAMI
SENJI NANBARA
HIROSHI NODA
MASUMI HARA
HIROKO INADA
HIROKAZU MAKIGAMI
KAZUYO YOSHIDA
MY NAME WASN'T ON THE LIST.
MY DREAM DIDN'T COME TRUE...

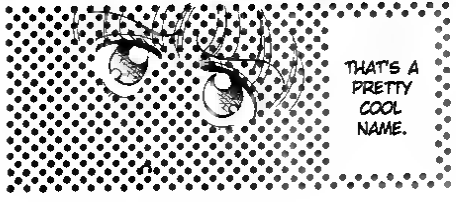
THIS WAY
-NAKUKOSHI AQUARIUM-
ADULTS: ¥ CHILDREN: ¥3

HEY, WHAT'S UP?! DO YOU LIKE THOSE EELS?
WHAT?!
NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU WATCH THEM, THEY WON'T MOVE.
BUT STILL, THEY'RE PRETTY INTERESTING.
WHO'S HE?
IS HE TALKING TO ME?

CHECK IT OUT! THEY LOOK STRANGE AS WELL.
HOW WEIRD!
SEA HORSES
COME HERE.
LOOK! LOOK!
WHAT'S GOING ON? HE'S BEING TOO FRIENDLY, ACTING LIKE WE'RE FRIENDS EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NOT.
I DON'T KNOW THIS GUY. WHO THE HECK IS HE?
LIFE IN THE OCEAN LOOKS SO RELAXED. DO YOU THINK WE CAN BE JUST AS COMFORTABLE WATCHING THEM?
UH... YEAH.
HA HA HA.

WHAT AM I DOING?! I DON'T HAVE TO BE NICE TO THIS GUY, BUT...
BUT HE'S RIGHT.
THEY ALL COME FROM THE OCEAN--
--ESPECIALLY THE WHALES AND DOLPHINS, SWIMMING FREELY.
THEY LIVE WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT TIME. I ENVY THEM.


THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY--
--BUT I CAN SEE THEM WHENEVER I COME HERE.
I SEE YOU A LOT HERE IN THIS AQUARIUM, AND YOU'RE ALWAYS BY YOURSELF.
YOU REALLY LIKE THIS PLACE, DON'T YOU?
MARUK
MARUKOSHI AQUARIUM 8F
MARUKOSHI BUILDING
MARUKOSHI CINEMA 2F
NOW P YING
I LIKE IT TOO. I COME HERE PRETTY OFTEN MYSELF.
OH, REALLY?
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?



OMAKE

HELLO!
I HOPE YOU HAVE A PEACEFUL TEATIME WITH THIS BOOK.
THIS IS MY SECOND BOOK PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH! IF IT WEREN'T FOR EVERYONE'S SUPPORT OF ***CALL ME PRINCESS***, THIS BOOK WOULD NEVER HAVE COME OUT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. THIS IS NOT A HAPPY, CUTE STORY LIKE ***CALL ME PRINCESS***, BUT I HOPE YOU LIKE IT TOO.

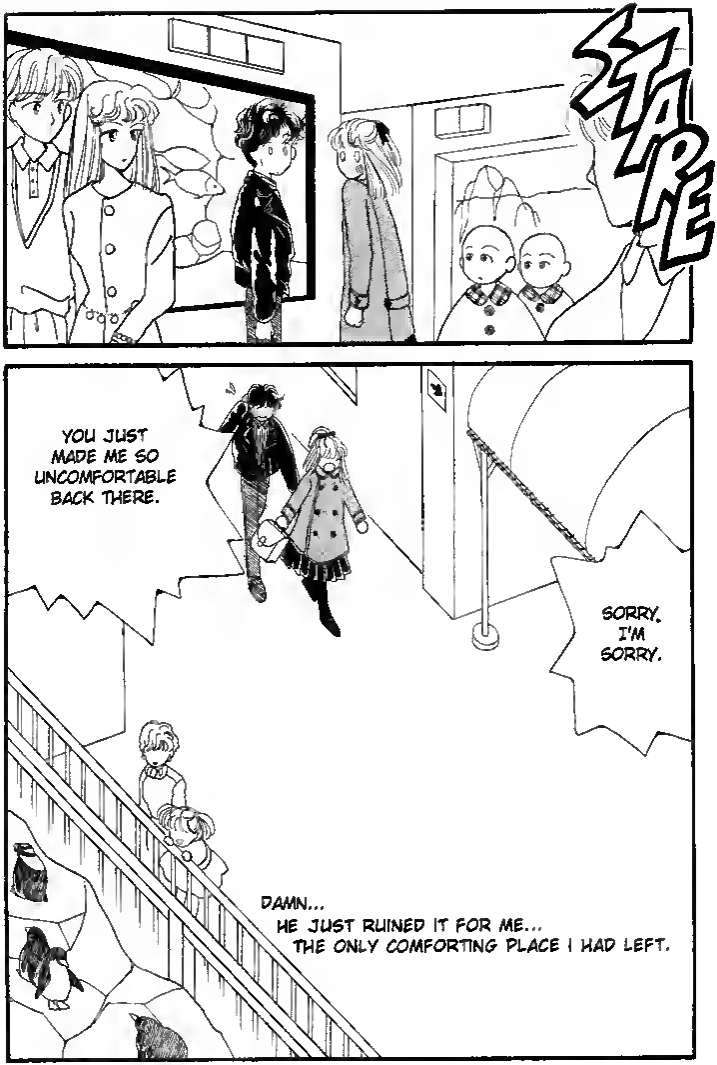
I'M A FAN OF WHALE COLLECTABLES. I ESPECIALLY LOVE SHAMU, THE ORCA. I OWN PHOTO BOOKS, STATIONERY, CHINA FIGURINES, AND OTHER KILLER WHALE-SHAPED ACCESSORIES. SINCE I CAN'T ACTUALLY OWN A KILLER WHALE, I HAVE TO COLLECT THINGS WITH THEIR IMAGES INSTEAD. I AM ESPECIALLY FOND OF THE WORKS OF MARINE PHOTOGRAPHER HIROYA MINAKUCHI AND ENVIRONMENTAL ARTIST WYLAND. I EVEN HAVE BEACH TOWELS WITH WYLAND'S PAINTINGS HANGING UP IN MY ROOM. WHEN I TRAVELED AROUND THE USA, I WOULD HAPPEN UPON HIS PAINTINGS AND IT WOULD MAKE ME REALLY HAPPY!! I HOPE THAT I CAN MEET HIM SOME DAY.

YEARS AGO, WHEN I WENT TO DISNEY IN L.A., I SAW WYLAND'S PAINTING OF A DOLPHIN WITH ARIEL FROM ***THE LITTLE MERMAID***. OF ALL THE DISNEY PRINCESSES, I LOVE ARIEL THE BEST, SO THIS PAINTING WAS PERFECT FOR ME! UNFORTUNATELY THE PRINT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE FOR ME TO BUY.

WHEN I WAS IN KINDERGARTEN I PLAYED THE ROLE OF THE MERMAID PRINCESS. ONE BOY RECOMMENDED ME FOR THE PART. EVER SINCE THEN I'VE LOVED THE SAD TALE OF THE ***THE LITTLE MERMAID*** BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

-TOMOKO TANIGUCHI

HE ENJOYS TELLING GIRLS HIS NAME WHEN HE'S TRYING TO GET THEM TO GO OUT WITH HIM.
HIS NAME SOUNDS COOL, LIKE SOME ACTOR, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO TELL HIM THAT.
I DON'T LIKE FLIGHTY GUYS...
ER... EXCUSE ME, I'M IN A HURRY.
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE IN HURRY?! YOU WERE WATCHING THE EELS FOR TEN MINUTES!
I...JUST LIKE EELS. LEAVE ME ALONE.


STARE
YOU JUST MADE ME SO UNCOMFORTABLE BACK THERE.
SORRY. I'M SORRY.
DAMN... HE JUST RUINED IT FOR ME... THE ONLY COMFORTING PLACE I HAD LEFT.

IT WAS SO HARD STUDYING FOR THE ENTRANCE EXAMS.
BUT I HAD A REALLY GOOD TIME IN JUNIOR HIGH.
I HAD FRIENDS...
AND ISHIDA WAS THERE TOO. BUT THAT LOVE ONLY WENT ONE WAY.

OOP
OOP.
OOP
THEY'RE CLOSING SOON, MISS SATO.

COME AGAIN!
EXIT
MY NAME'S NOT SATO. YOU LOSE.
OKAY, HOW ABOUT SUZUKI? OR SAITO?
EXIT
I'M UCHIYAMA. YOU WIN.
BUILDING
Aquarium 8F
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
ARE YOU IN JUNIOR HIGH, MISS UCHIYAMA?
I JUST STARTED HIGH SCHOOL.

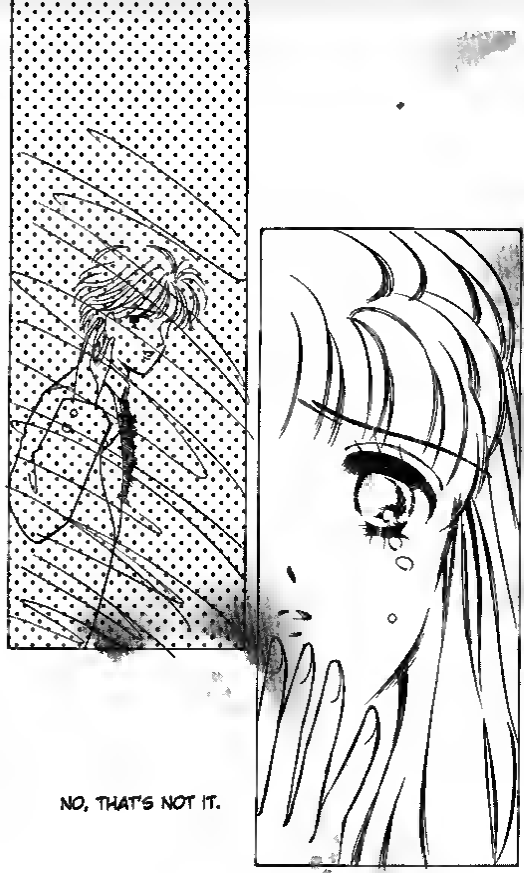
IT'S A GIRLS' SCHOOL I APPLIED TO, AS MY SECOND CHOICE.

THERE ARE LOTS OF GAUDY GIRLS...AND GIRLS WHO DYE THEIR HAIR RED...

OH DEAR. I SHOULDN'T LET IT GET ME DOWN.
THEY AREN'T THE SAME KIND OF FRIENDS I HAD IN JUNIOR HIGH...
I DON'T LIKE THIS UNIFORM.
I'M TIRED OF WEARING SAILOR UNIFORMS AFTER THREE YEARS OF JUNIOR HIGH.
DO GIRLS CHOOSE SCHOOLS BY THE STYLE OF THEIR UNIFORMS?
hmph.

THAT'S RIGHT! LOOK AT THAT! I WANTED TO WEAR THAT KIND, WITH THE BLAZER...

ISHIDA...!
SEE YOU LATER.



NO, THAT'S NOT IT.

I DON'T REALLY CARE WHAT KIND OF UNIFORM I WEAR.

I DON'T REALLY DISLIKE SAILOR UNIFORMS.

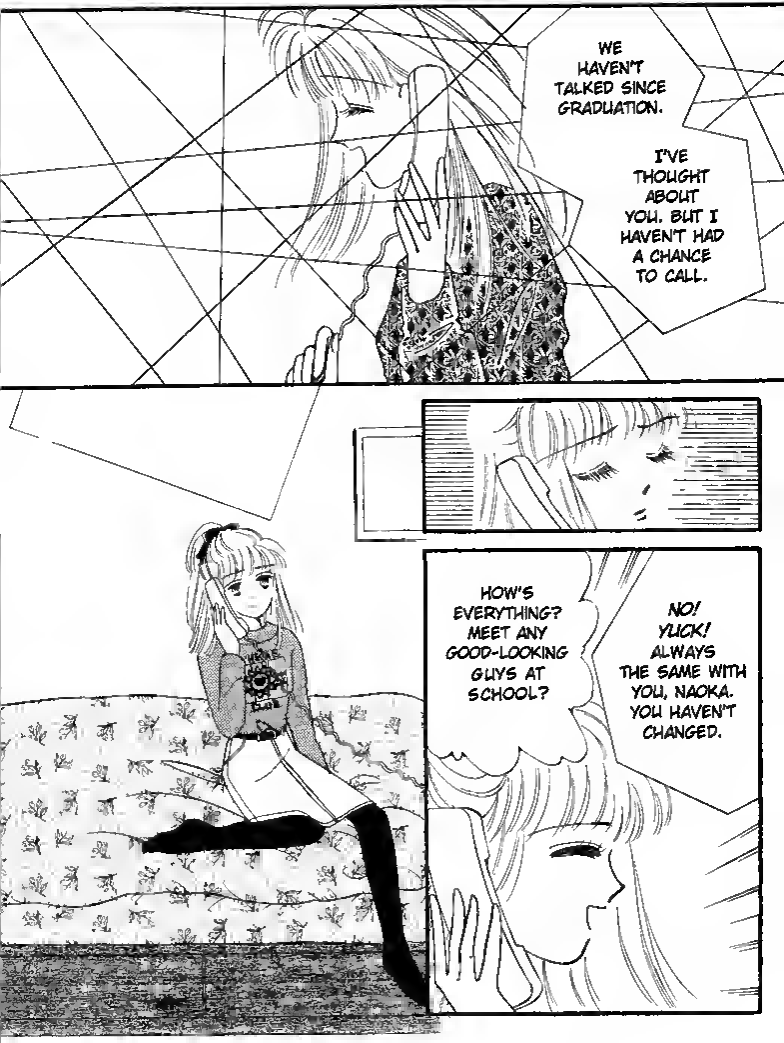
I ONLY REALLY CARE ABOUT...

EVEN IF MY LOVE FOR ISHIDA ISN'T RETURNED...
I JUST WANTED TO GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL AND WEAR THE SAME UNIFORM AS HIM.
JUST LIKE THOSE GIRLS...
I STUDIED REALLY HARD, BUT--
--I JUST COULDN'T GET IN.

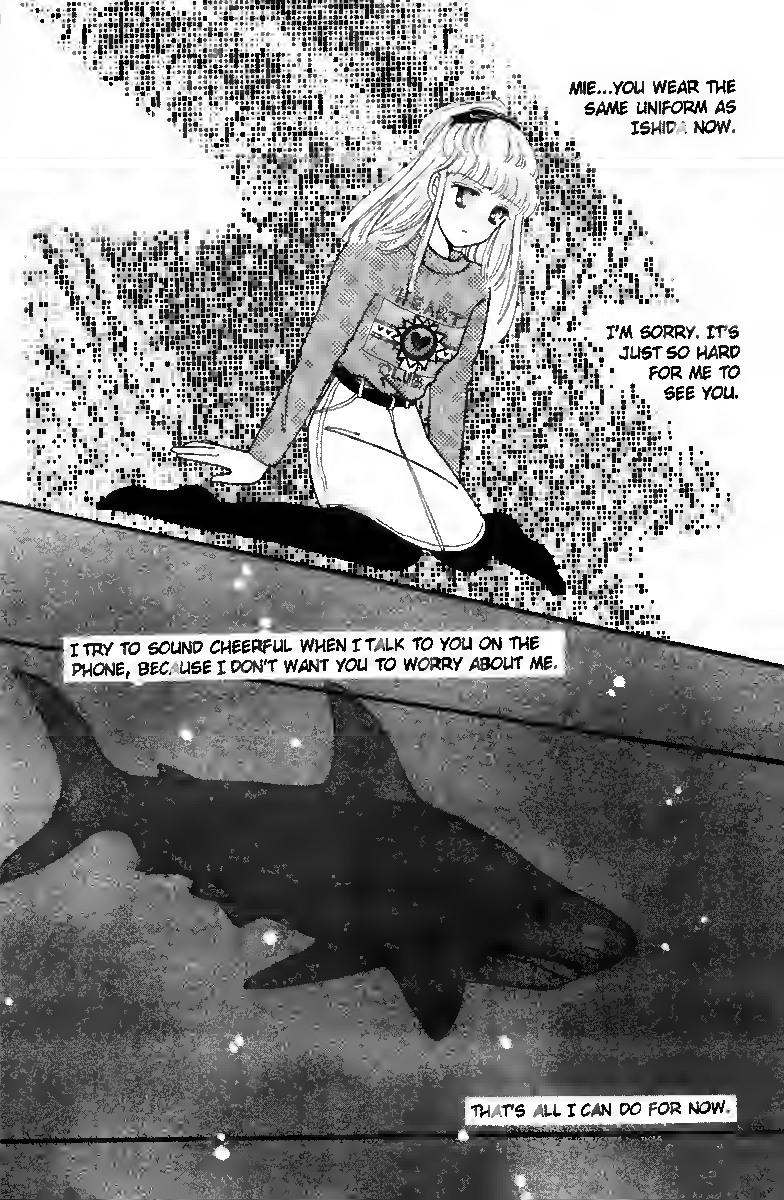
MISS UCHIYAMA...
WELL, I HAVE TO GO. BYE!
NO. NO. NO.
I CAN'T CRY IN FRONT OF HIM. HE JUST TRIED TO PICK ME UP. I DON'T EVEN KNOW HIM.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAW ISHIDA TODAY.
I'M HOME!
NAOKA, YOU'RE LATE. WERE YOU AT THE AQUARIUM?
YEAH...
HEY, SIS. YOU GOING SOMEWHERE?
SHE'S GOING TO A WELCOME PARTY FOR FRESHMEN.
SHE PASSED THE ENTRANCE EXAM ON HER FIRST TRY.
MY SISTER'S GOING TO HER FIRST-CHOICE COLLEGE.
HE...
SHE LOOKS SO HAPPY EVERY DAY.

I MADE YOUR FAVORITE, BEEF STROGANOFF.
YOU CAN HAVE YOUR SISTER'S TOO.
OKAY.
I KNOW MY MOM WORRIES ABOUT ME.
NOT THAT IT DOES ME ANY GOOD, THOUGH.
RING RING
HELLO? UCHIYAMA RESIDENCE.
HI, NAOKA? IT'S ME. LONG TIME, NO SEE. HOW ARE YOU?
MIE...
I... I'M FINE.


WE HAVEN'T TALKED SINCE GRADUATION.
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT YOU. BUT I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO CALL.
HOW'S EVERYTHING? MEET ANY GOOD-LOOKING GUYS AT SCHOOL?
NO! YUCK! ALWAYS THE SAME WITH YOU, NAOKA. YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED.

THAT'S BECAUSE I CAN'T MEET ANY BOYS AT AN ALL-GIRLS SCHOOL. MIE, YOU FIND ONE AND INTRODUCE ME. OKAY?
IT'S GOOD TO HEAR YOU'RE DOING WELL. WE SHOULD GET TOGETHER SOMEDAY.
UM... YEAH.
OKAY, I'LL CALL YOU SOON.
OKAY. I'LL CALL YOU TOO. TALK TO YOU LATER. BYE.
I CAN'T MEET HER.
I'M NOT GONNA CALL HER EITHER.


MIE...YOU WEAR THE SAME UNIFORM AS ISHIDA NOW.
I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST SO HARD FOR ME TO SEE YOU.
I TRY TO SOUND CHEERFUL WHEN I TALK TO YOU ON THE PHONE, BECAUSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO WORRY ABOUT ME.
THAT'S ALL I CAN DO FOR NOW.

OMAKE

HI AGAIN!!

I'VE BEEN TO AQUARIUMS IN SAN DIEGO AND OHIO, AND I'VE EVEN SEEN SHAMU IN VANCOUVER. I ALSO LOVE THE SMALL AQUARIUMS IN JAPAN. THERE IS ONE AQUARIUM IN JAPAN THAT HAS A HUGE SCHOOL OF TUNA FISH. IMAGINE HUNDREDS OF SHINY SILVER TUNA FISH SWIMMING TOGETHER. THEY LOOK LIKE GORGEOUS TIN ROBOTS! OTHER JAPANESE HAVE VERY DIFFERENT OPINIONS ABOUT TUNA. THEY LOOK AT THEM AND THINK ABOUT HOW DELICIOUS THEY ARE, OR THEY IMAGINE HOW EXPENSIVE IT WOULD BE FOR ONE OF THOSE FISH. YOU KNOW, JAPANESE PEOPLE LOVE RAW TUNA, IT'S VERY POPULAR AND EXPENSIVE. ONE HUGE TUNA IS WORTH MILLIONS OF YEN (THOUSANDS OF U.S. DOLLARS).

WHILE WRITING THIS OMAKE, I NOTICED ON THE NEWS THAT A WILD ORCA GOT LOST AND SWAM UP A SMALL RIVER IN NAGOYA, JAPAN. LOTS OF PEOPLE WENT TO WATCH HIM. I WOULD GO TO WATCH HIM TOO, BUT NAGOYA IS VERY FAR FROM ME. PEOPLE HELPED HIM BACK INTO THE OCEAN AND THEY ALL HOPED THAT HE COULD REJOIN HIS FAMILY.

MY DREAM IS TO GO OBSERVE ORCAS IN THE WILD, IN A PLACE LIKE CANADA OR SOME OTHER NORTHERN COUNTRY, BUT I WOULD HATE TO DISTURB THEIR LIFE.

-TOMOKO

I THINK IT'S FINE FOR THOSE SMALL FISH TO BE HERE,
BUT FOR THE BIGGER ANIMALS, LIKE THE DOLPHINS AND THE WHALES--
--IT'S SO SAD.
THEY'RE USED TO BEING FREE IN THE VAST OCEANS.
I KNOW THEY STILL HAVE THEIR OWN TERRITORY HERE, BUT--
--THEY CAME FROM THE OCEAN AND ARE NOW IN THESE SMALL TANKS.

YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT WE CAN COME AND SEE THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE HERE.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT TOO, BUT...
AND IF YOU HADN'T COME HERE--
--YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MET ME.

HE HAS ALOT OF NERVE, SAYING THAT. I DON'T HAVE A WITTY COMEBACK, THOUGH.
I'VE WANTED TO TALK TO YOU FOR A LONG TIME NOW.
BUT I'M VERY SHY, SO I JUST COULDN'T DO IT.
OH. PLEASE! STOP IT, WILL YOU?!
HEY, DO YOU WANT TO GO SEE THE BIGGER WHALES AT THE OTHER AQUARIUM NEXT TIME?
IT'S PRETTY FAR, SO YOU DON'T WANNA GO BY YOURSELF, RIGHT?
THEY HAVE KILLER WHALE AND DOLPHIN SHOWS.

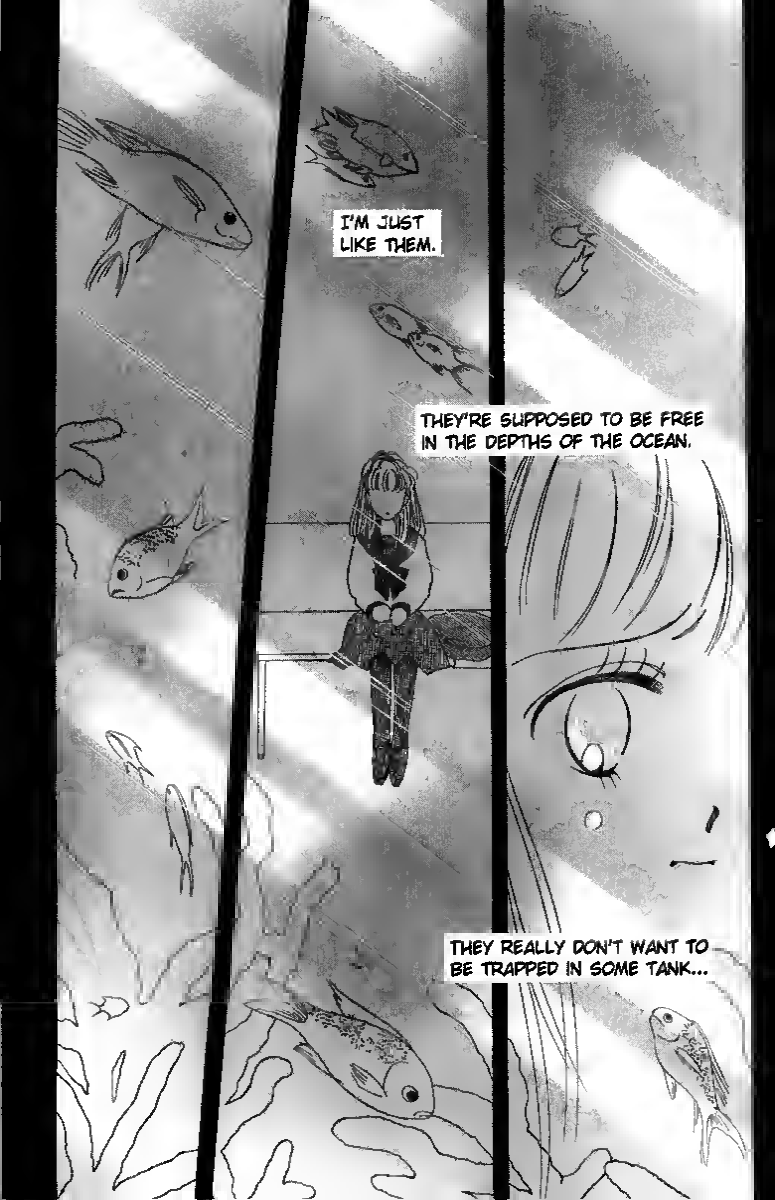
YES... I WANT TO GO.
I...I JUST WANT TO SEE THE WHALES...
IT'S NOT BECAUSE I WANT TO GO WITH THIS PICKUP ARTIST...
WHAT?!
ALL RIGHT. HOW ABOUT NEXT SUNDAY, OR...
IS THAT TOO SOON?
OH, NO. I CAN'T BELIEVE I ANSWERED HIM SO QUICKLY.

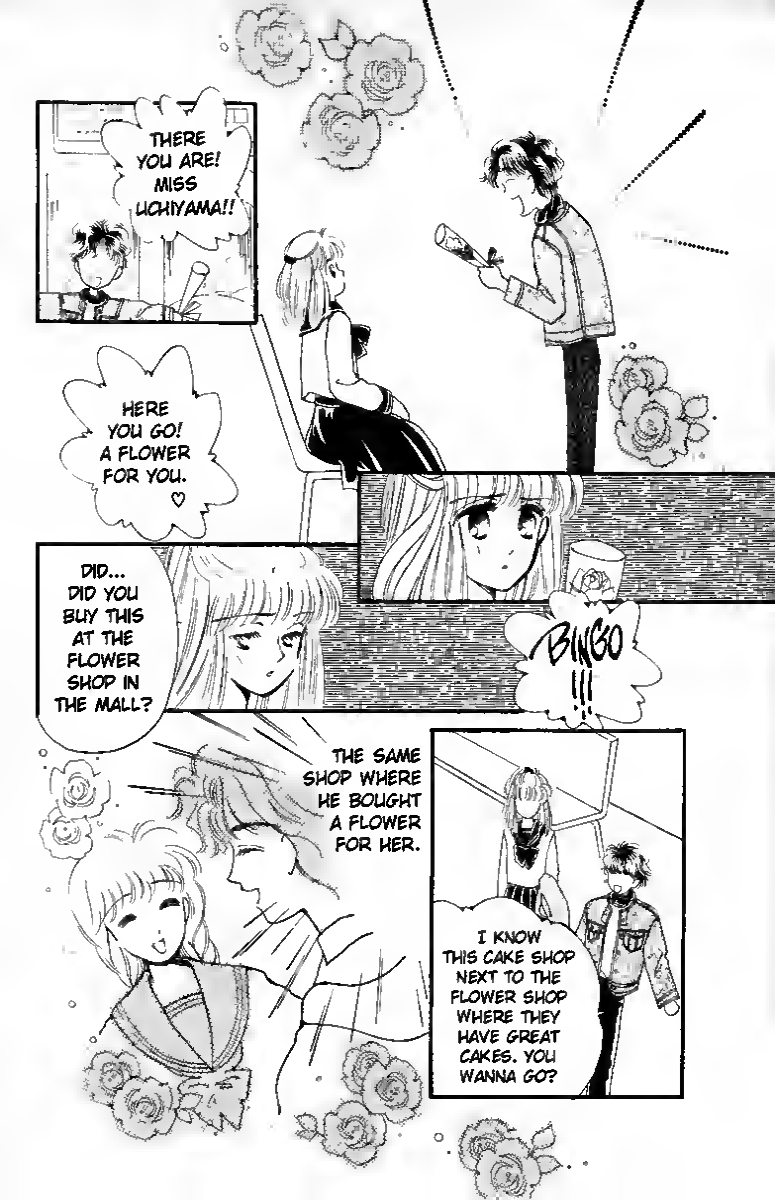
WELL, PEOPLE WHO LOVE LIVING THINGS CAN'T BE ALL THAT BAD--
--CAN THEY?
MARUKOSHI FLOWERS
C'MON. WHAT DO YOU THINK? BUY ME A ROSE! PLEASE?!
HUH?
CHI
THAT'S HIM!

CAN I HELP YOU?
A RED ONE. ♡
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
HE HAS A GIRL-FRIEND...
BUT HE PICKS UP OTHER GIRLS?!

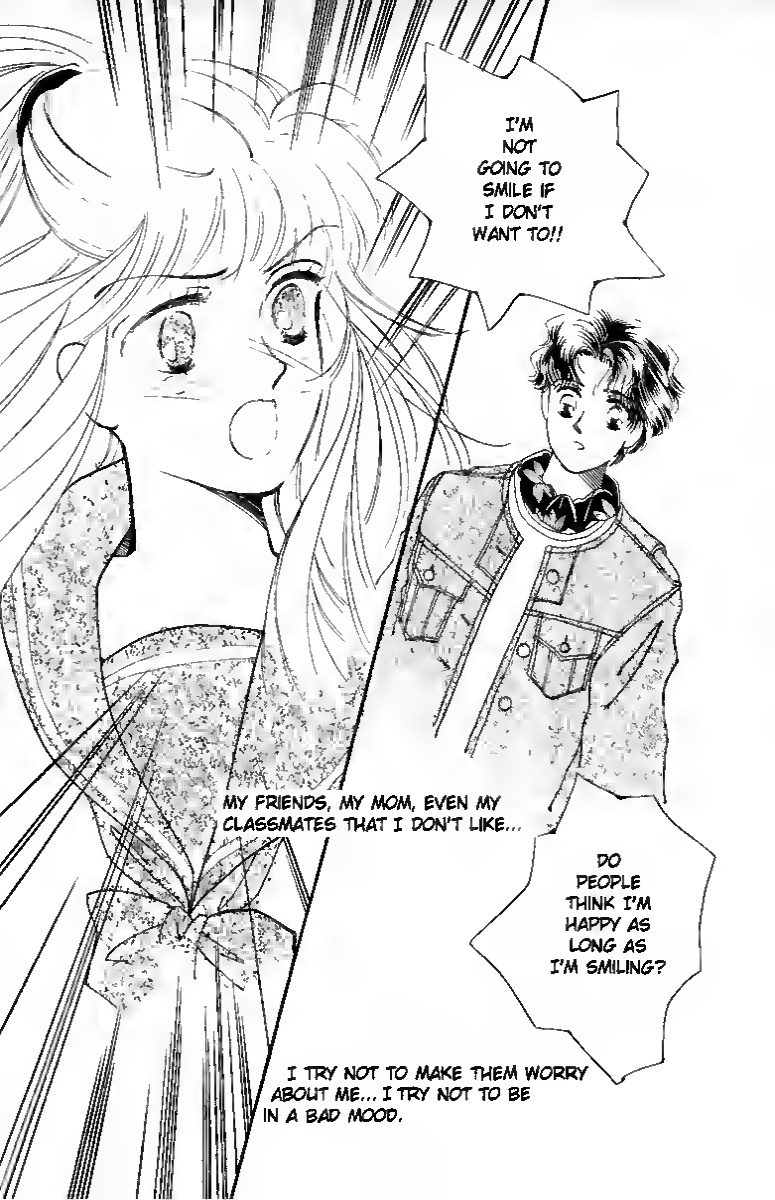
WHAT A JERK! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
HOW DARE HE!!
UCHIYAMA! YOU DID YOUR HOMEWORK, DIDN'T YOU?
CAN I BORROW IT? WE'RE FRIENDS, RIGHT?
YEAH ...

WE WEREN'T REALLY GOOD FRIENDS IN JUNIOR HIGH, BUT...
DID YOU GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL AS UCHIYAMA?
YEAH! SHE'S SMART!!
REALLY?! WHAT'S A SMART GIRL DOING HERE?
OUCH! THAT HURTS! KANAN, YOU'RE SO MEAN!
I'M HERE--
--BUT DON'T WANT TO BE.
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


I'M JUST LIKE THEM.
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FREE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN.
THEY REALLY DON'T WANT TO BE TRAPPED IN SOME TANK...


THERE YOU ARE! MISS UCHIYAMA!!
HERE YOU GO! A FLOWER FOR YOU. ♡
DID... DID YOU BUY THIS AT THE FLOWER SHOP IN THE MALL?
BINGO !!!
THE SAME SHOP WHERE HE BOUGHT A FLOWER FOR HER.
I KNOW THIS CAKE SHOP NEXT TO THE FLOWER SHOP WHERE THEY HAVE GREAT CAKES. YOU WANNA GO?

FLOWER AND CAKE...
WHAT'S WRONG? ARE YOU UPSET?
HEY, C'MON. SMILE! SMILE!
HE KNOWS WHAT GIRLS LIKE. THAT'S WHY HE HAS SUCH CONFIDENCE WHEN HE'S TRYING TO GET THEM TO GO OUT WITH HIM.
I DON'T HAVE TO PUT ON A SMILE FOR THIS KIND OF GUY.


I'M NOT GOING TO SMILE IF I DON'T WANT TO!!
MY FRIENDS, MY MOM, EVEN MY CLASSMATES THAT I DON'T LIKE...
DO PEOPLE THINK I'M HAPPY AS LONG AS I'M SMILING?
I TRY NOT TO MAKE THEM WORRY ABOUT ME... I TRY NOT TO BE IN A BAD MOOD.

THAT'S JUST NOT TRUE.
MISS UCHIYAMA, WAIT!

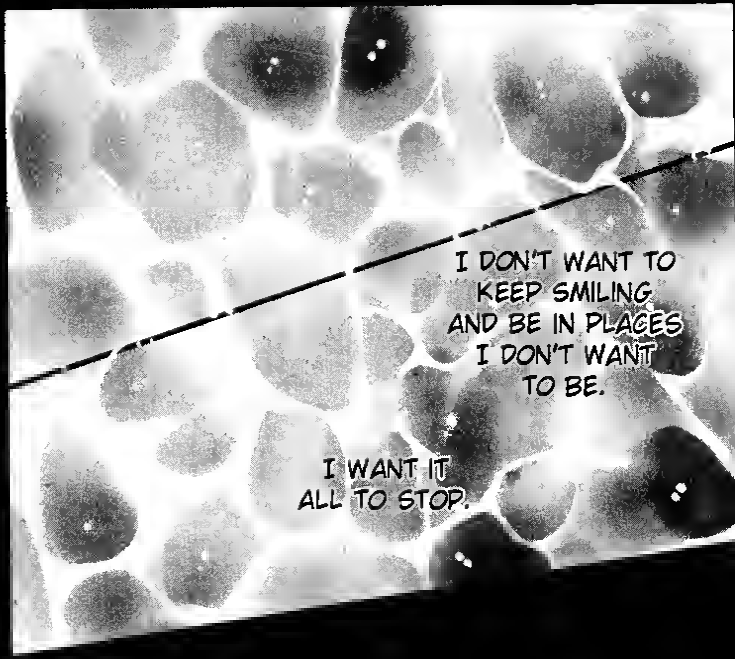
LADIES
OOPS! I CAN'T GO IN.
HUFF...
PUFF...
I'M GONNA STOP SMILING AND--
--END EVERY-THING ELSE TOO.

I HATE THAT GUY.
CLICK CLICK CLICK
HE JUST COMES RIGHT INTO THE ONE PLACE I LOVE AND TRIES TO PICK ME UP!
I'VE GOT A SURPRISE FOR HIM!
SPLASH
ONCE HE SEES THIS, HE'LL LEAVE ME ALONE.

LADIES
I'LL HAVE HOT CHOCO-LATE!
SIP
CLANK

HEY, YOU!
HEY!
WHAT HAPPENED? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MISS UCHIYAMA ?!

MISS UCHIYAMA ?!
QUICK! CALL 911!!



I'M GOING TO MAKE IT STOP.

SHE'S NOT BLEEDING TOO BADLY.
THE CUT IS NOT THAT DEEP.
SHE JUST FELL UNCON-SCIOUS DUE TO SHOCK.
AFTER SHE COMES TO, SHE CAN GO HOME.
HAVE YOU CONTACTED HER FAMILY?
I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.

I'LL CALL A TAXI.
UUGH...

OH, THAT'S RIGHT...
I CUT IT MYSELF.
WHEN THE BLADE CUT INTO MY WRIST--
--I FELT MY SOUL LEAVING MY BODY.

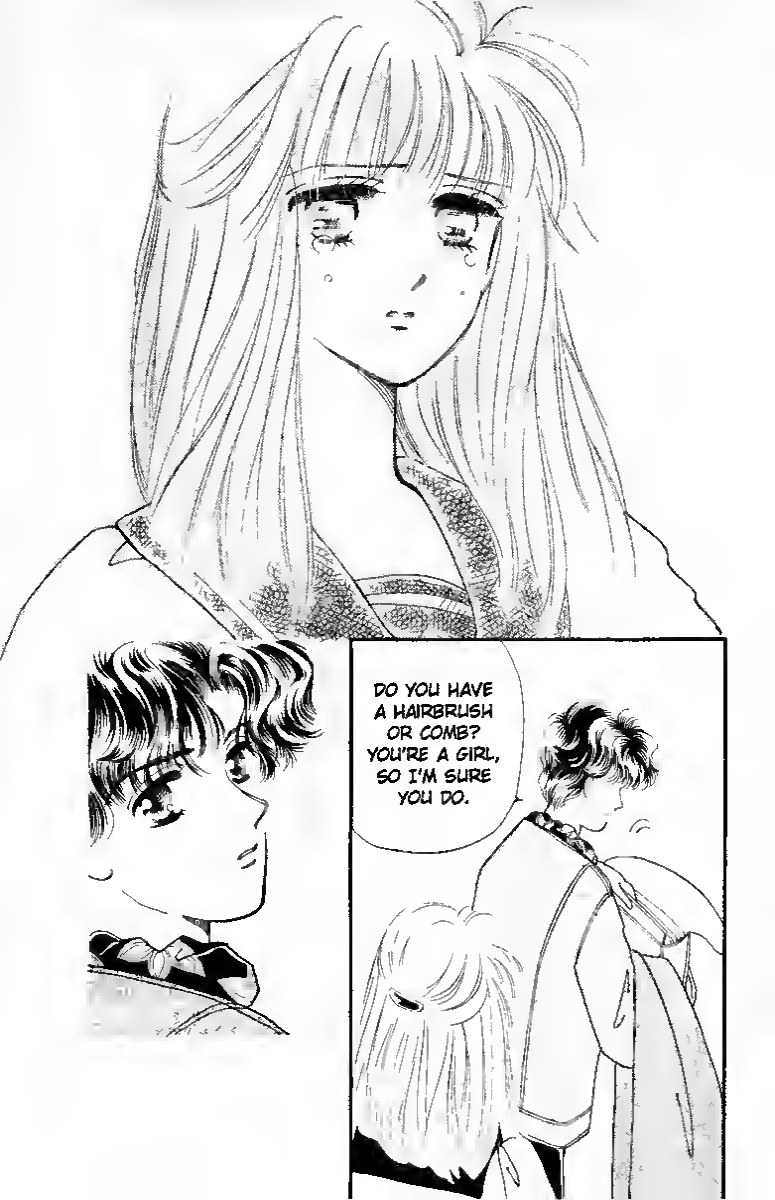
BUT I GUESS IT CAME BACK TO ME.
SLOWLY NOW ...
TAKE CARE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
GRAB

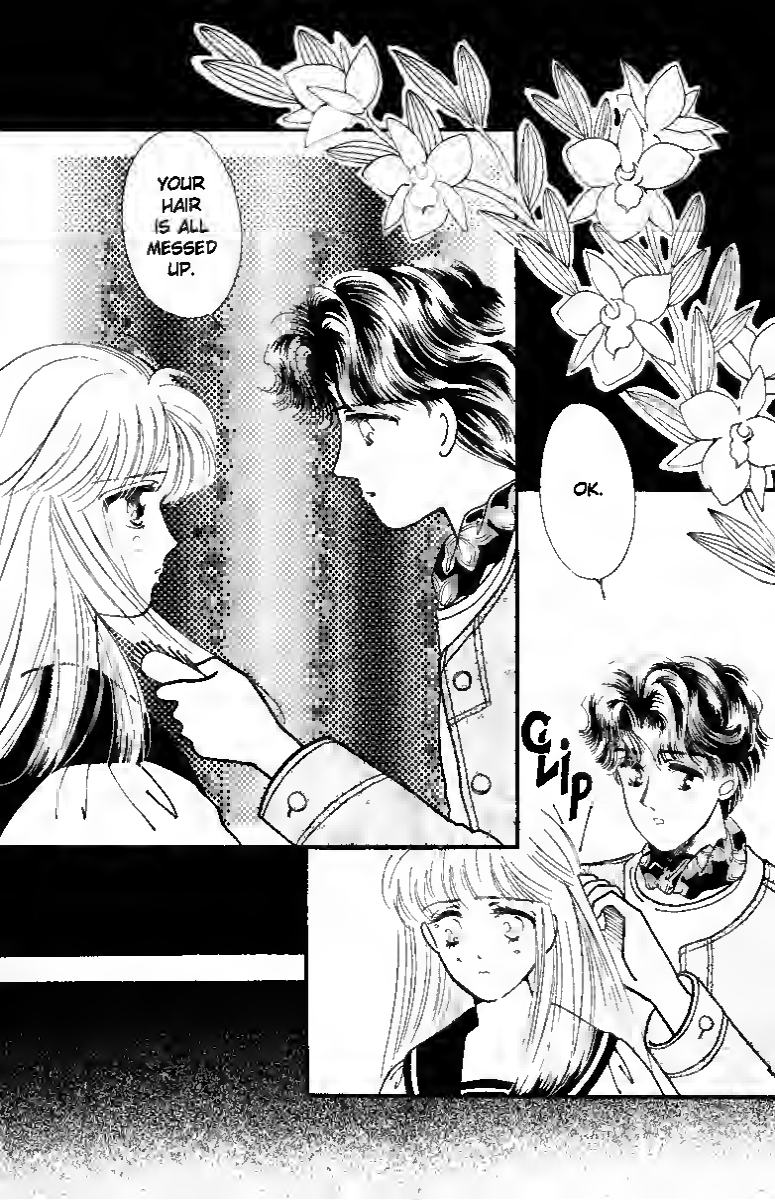
I FEEL LIKE I'M IN HANDCUFFS.

I FEEL LIKE
A CRIMINAL WHO DID
SOMETHING WRONG AND
WAS CAUGHT BY POLICE.

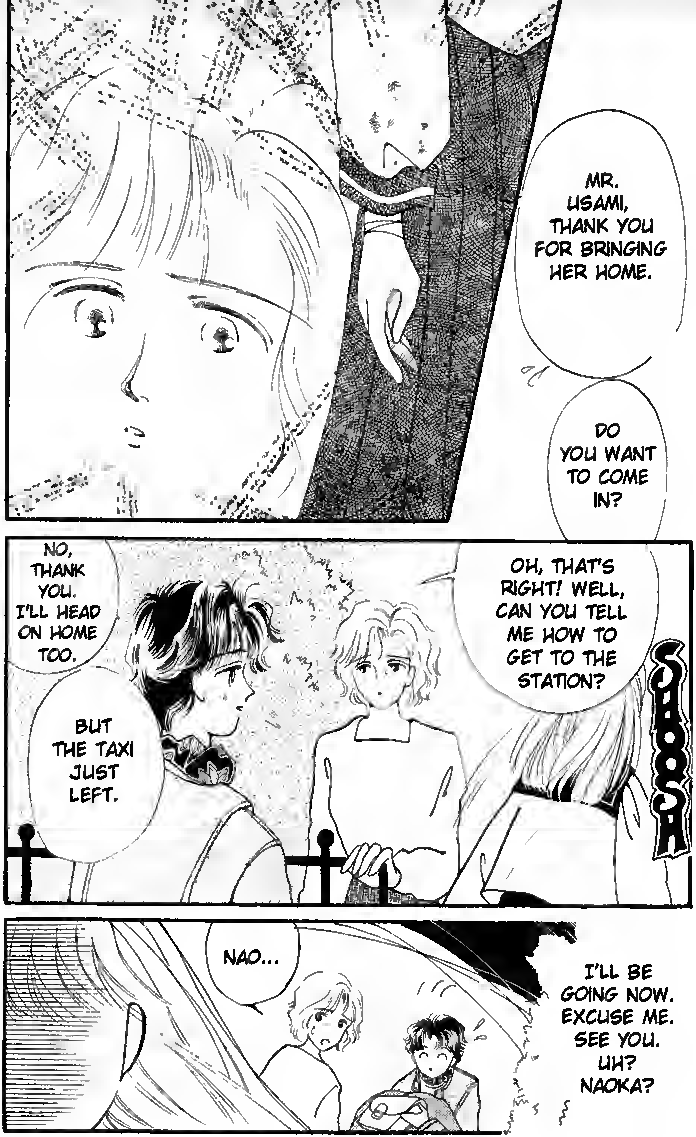
LOOKING AT
USAMI'S FACE
FROM THE SIDE...

IT'S PRETTY SCARY.

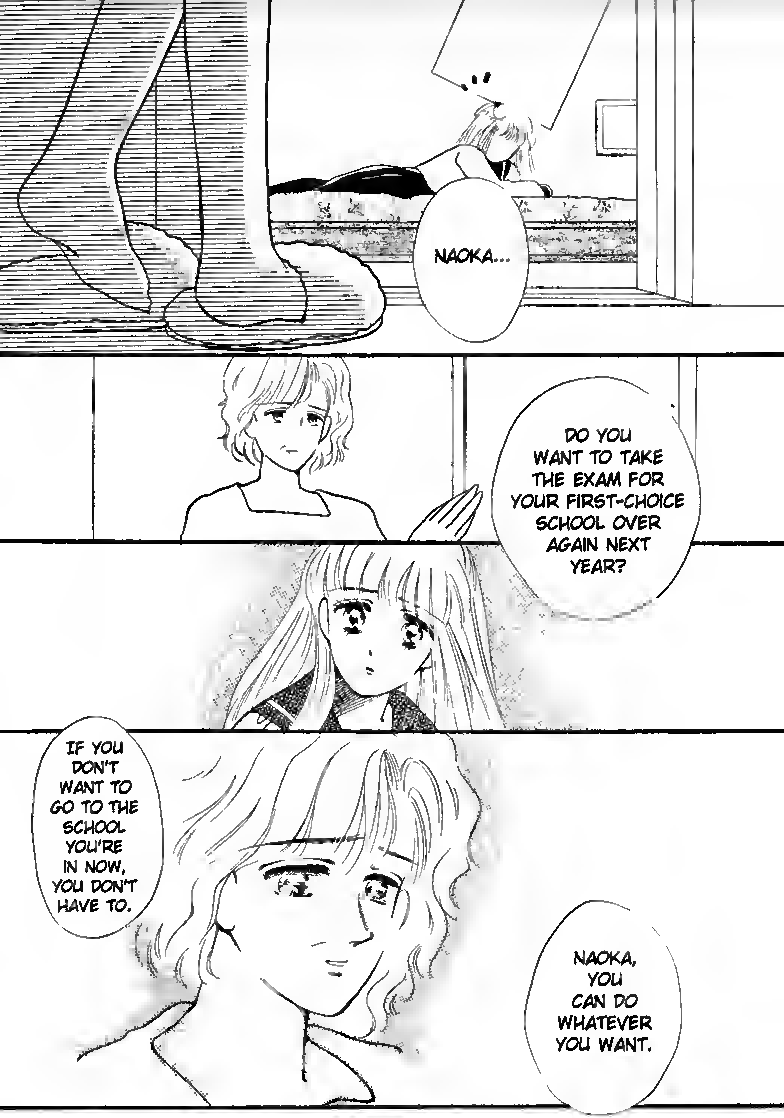

DO YOU HAVE A HAIRBRUSH OR COMB? YOU'RE A GIRL, SO I'M SURE YOU DO.


YOUR HAIR IS ALL MESSED UP.
OK.
CLIP

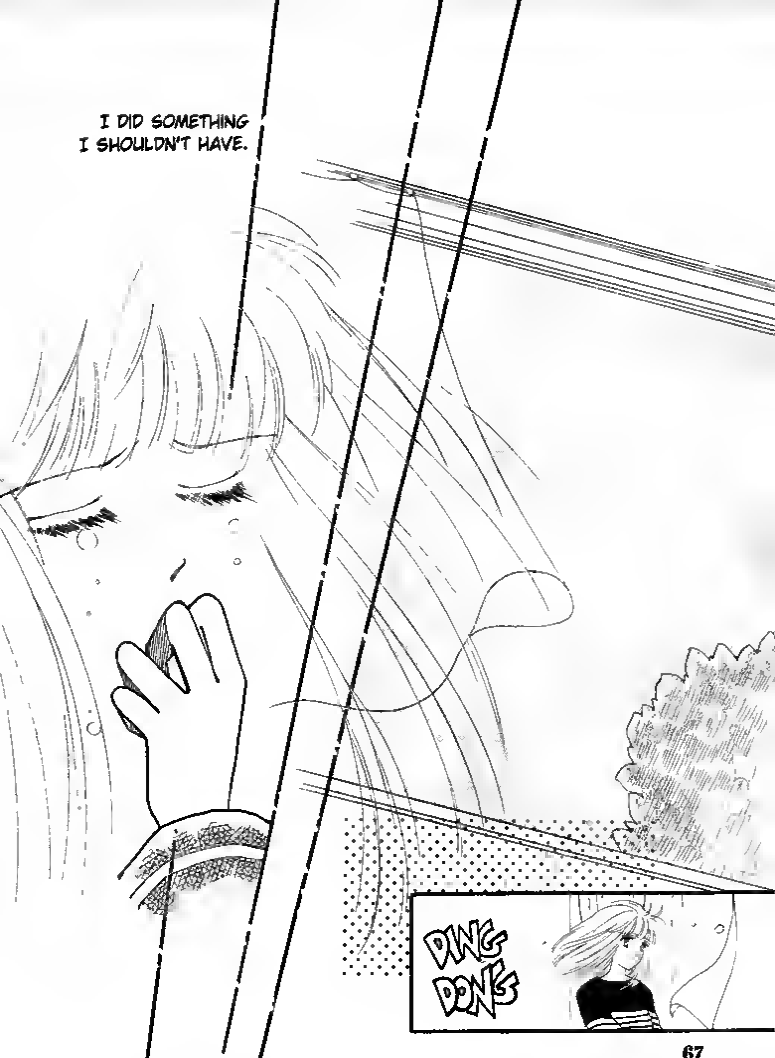
SCRATCH
GOOD EVENING.
NAOKA! ARE YOU HOME? IT'S PRETTY LATE. YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED...
UMM... I'M USAMI.
I SEE ...
I'M VERY SORRY. I...I KEPT HER OUT THIS LATE.
I ASKED HER TO HAVE DINNER AFTER WE LEFT THE AQUARIUM.
NO ONE TOLD THEM WHAT HAPPENED.

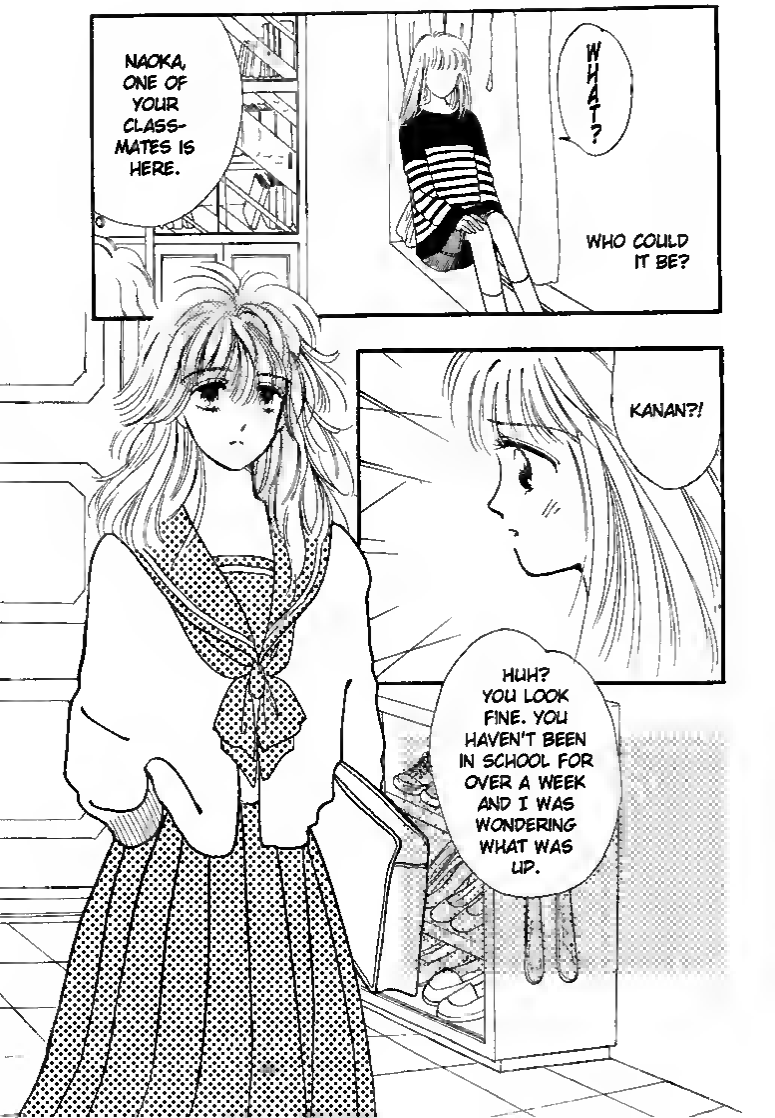

MR. USAMI, THANK YOU FOR BRINGING HER HOME.
DO YOU WANT TO COME IN?
NO, THANK YOU. I'LL HEAD ON HOME TOO.
BUT THE TAXI JUST LEFT.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! WELL, CAN YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET TO THE STATION?
SHOOSH
NAO...
I'LL BE GOING NOW. EXCUSE ME. SEE YOU. UH? NAOKA?

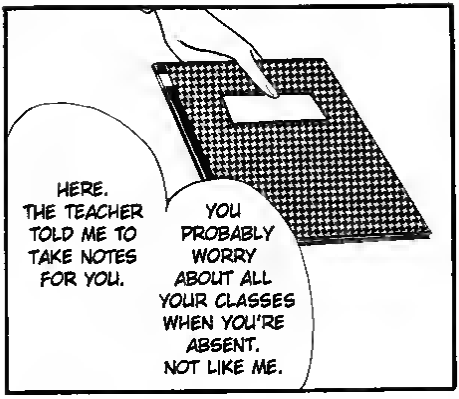
FWUMP
JUST WHY DID I CUT MYSELF?
MY MOM KNOWS THE TRUTH, EVEN IF I DON'T EXPLAIN A THING.
HE DIDN'T ASK ME ANYTHING.


NAOKA...
DO YOU WANT TO TAKE THE EXAM FOR YOUR FIRST-CHOICE SCHOOL OVER AGAIN NEXT YEAR?
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE SCHOOL YOU'RE IN NOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO.
NAOKA, YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.

MY MOM WAS SMILING--
--BUT I SAW HER EYES WERE FILLED WITH TEARS.
YEAH... I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
I'VE...
I'VE REALLY--
--DONE SOMETHING TERRIBLE.


I DID SOMETHING
I SHOULDN'T HAVE.
DING
DONG


NAOKA, ONE OF YOUR CLASS-MATES IS HERE.
WHAT?
WHO COULD IT BE?
KANAN?!
HUH? YOU LOOK FINE. YOU HAVEN'T BEEN IN SCHOOL FOR OVER A WEEK AND I WAS WONDERING WHAT WAS UP.



OMAKE

HELLO.

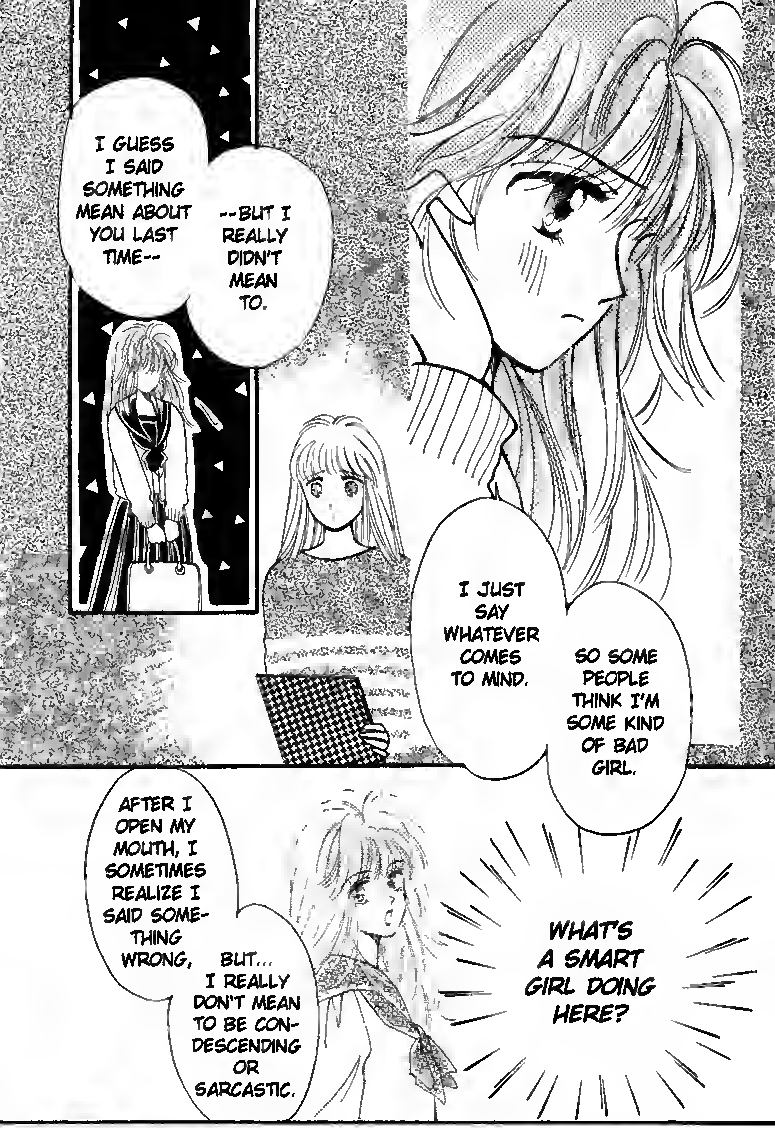
AQUARIUM IS NOT A HAPPY STORY LIKE ***CALL ME PRINCESS.*** IN JAPAN, MANY KIDS COMMIT SUICIDE BECAUSE OF THE TROUBLES THEY HAVE IN SCHOOL.

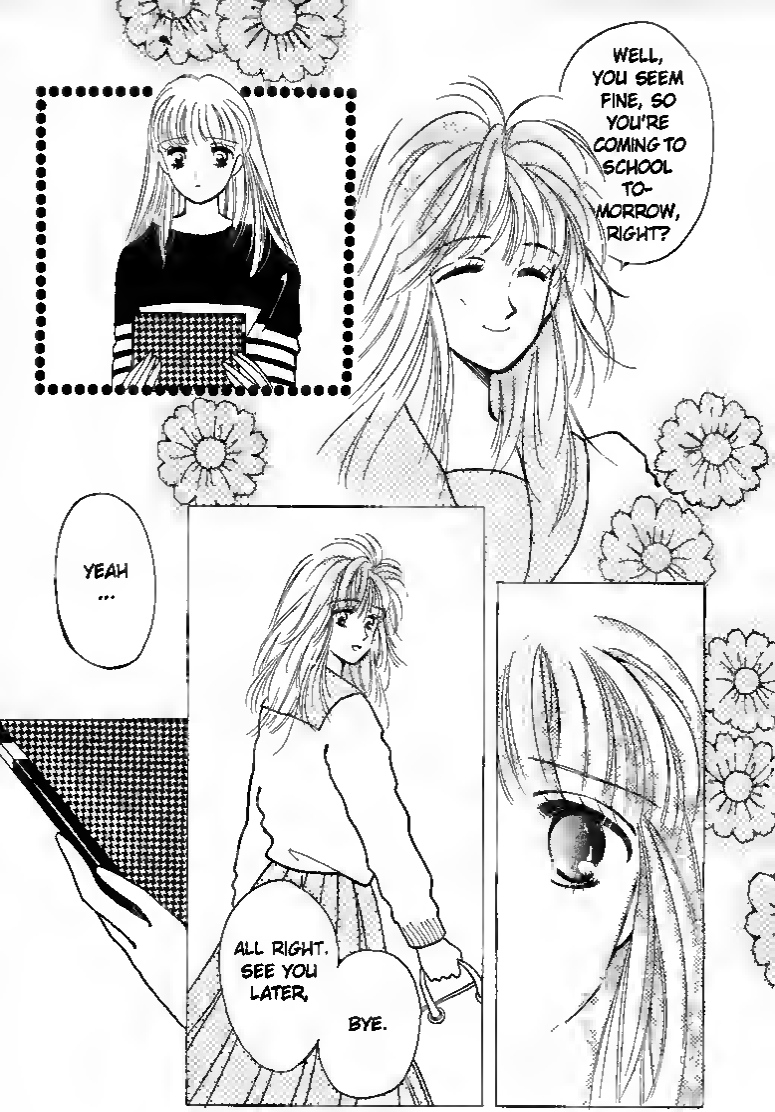
WHEN ***AQUARIUM*** WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN A JAPANESE MAGAZINE, MANY READERS TOLD ME THAT THEY HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS AS NAOKA, BUT THEY WERE ENCOURAGED BY THIS STORY.

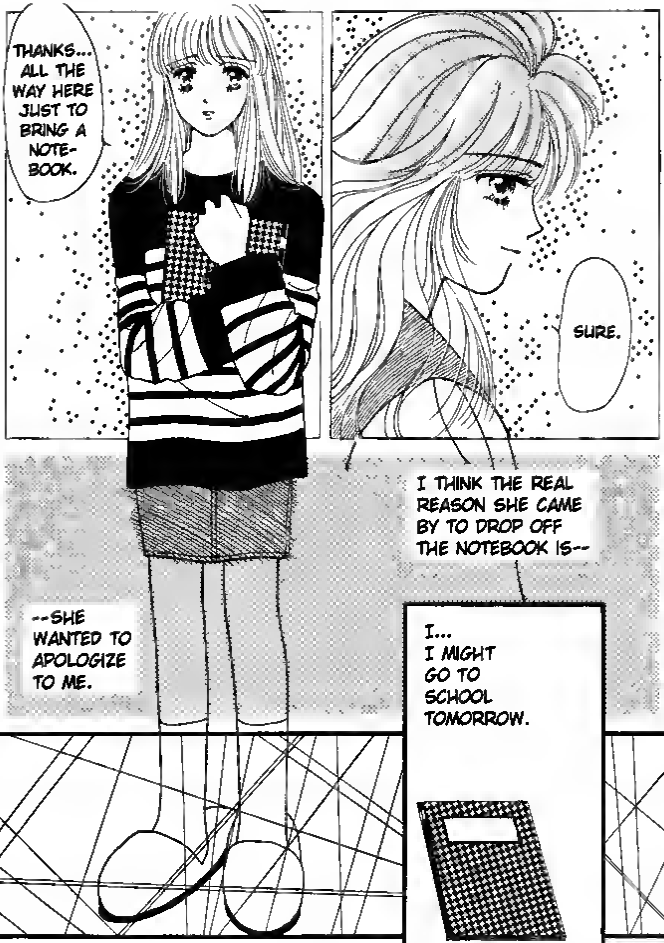
I HOPE MY STORY WILL ENCOURAGE READERS, EVEN IF IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT.

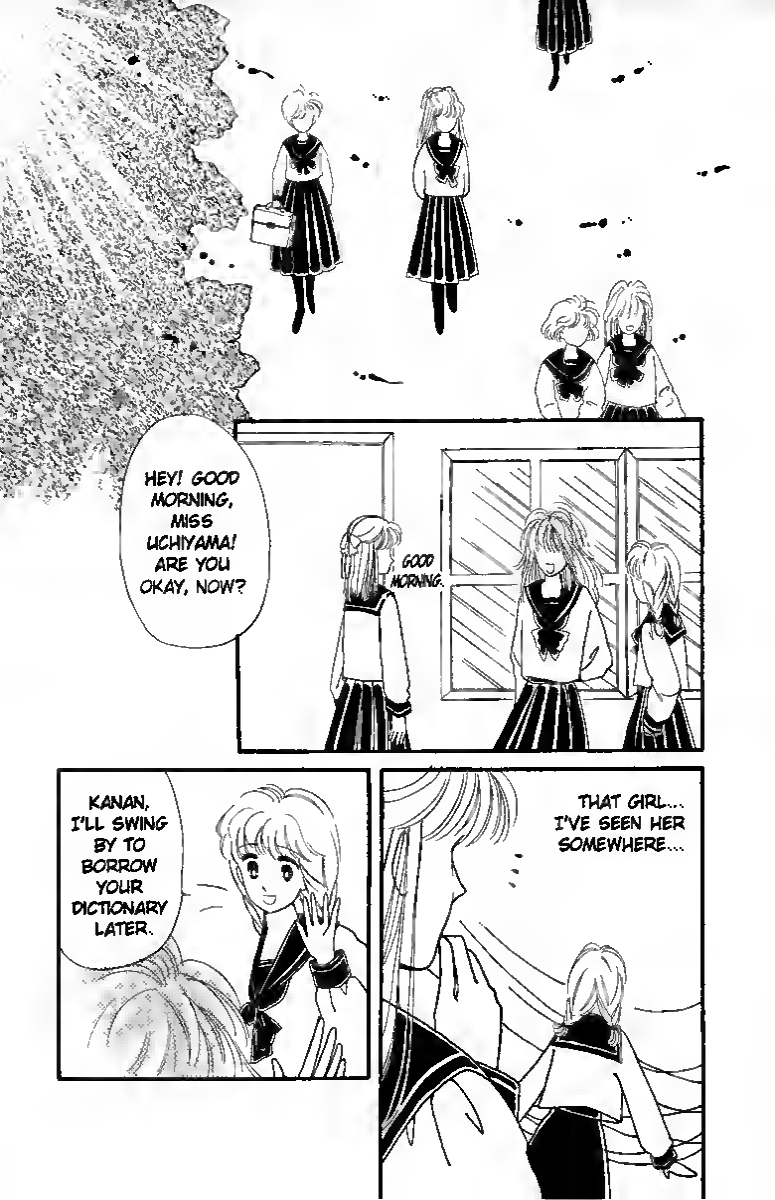
I AM NOT SURE READERS FROM AMERICA AND OTHER COUNTRIES CAN SHARE THE SAME FEELINGS AS NAOKA, BUT I HOPE YOU DO NOT HAVE PROBLEMS LIKE THIS IN YOUR COUNTRY.

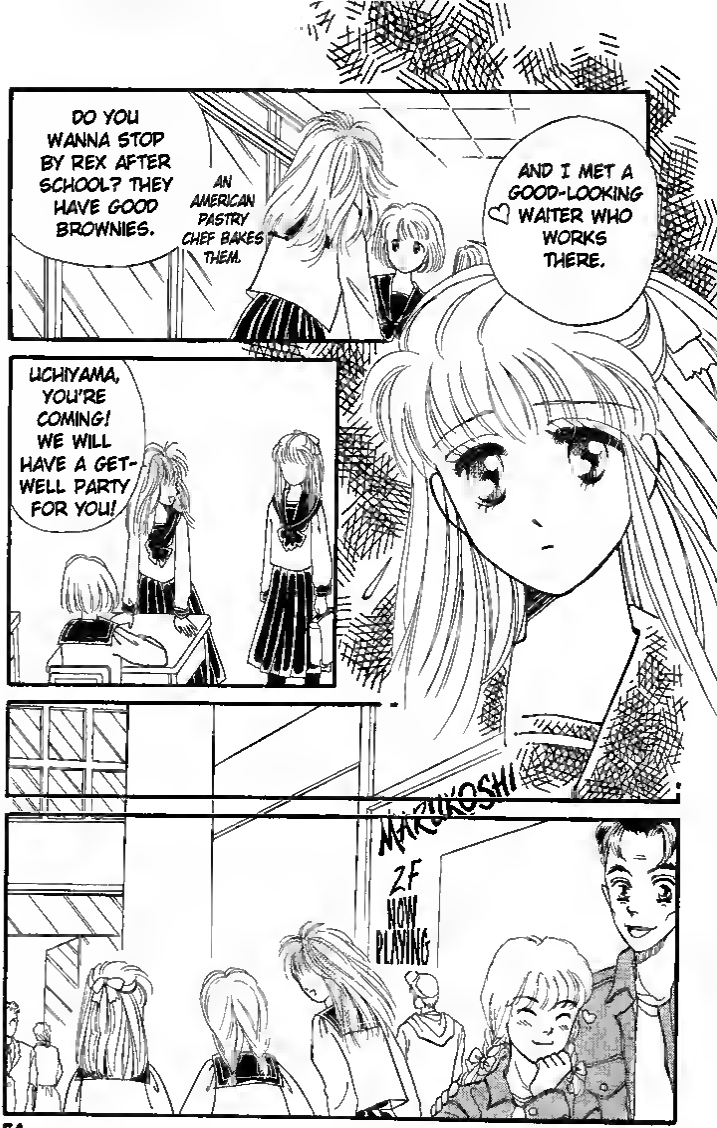
-TOMOKO

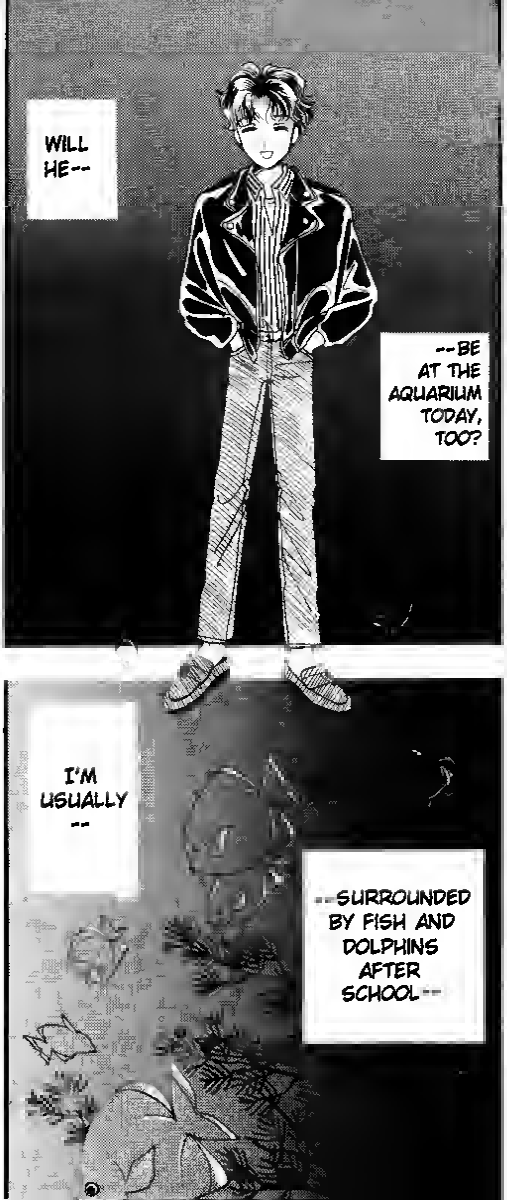

I GUESS I SAID SOMETHING MEAN ABOUT YOU LAST TIME--
--BUT I REALLY DIDN'T MEAN TO.
I JUST SAY WHATEVER COMES TO MIND.
SO SOME PEOPLE THINK I'M SOME KIND OF BAD GIRL.
WHAT'S A SMART GIRL DOING HERE?
AFTER I OPEN MY MOUTH, I SOMETIMES REALIZE I SAID SOMETHING WRONG,
BUT... I REALLY DON'T MEAN TO BE CONDESCENDING OR SARCASTIC.

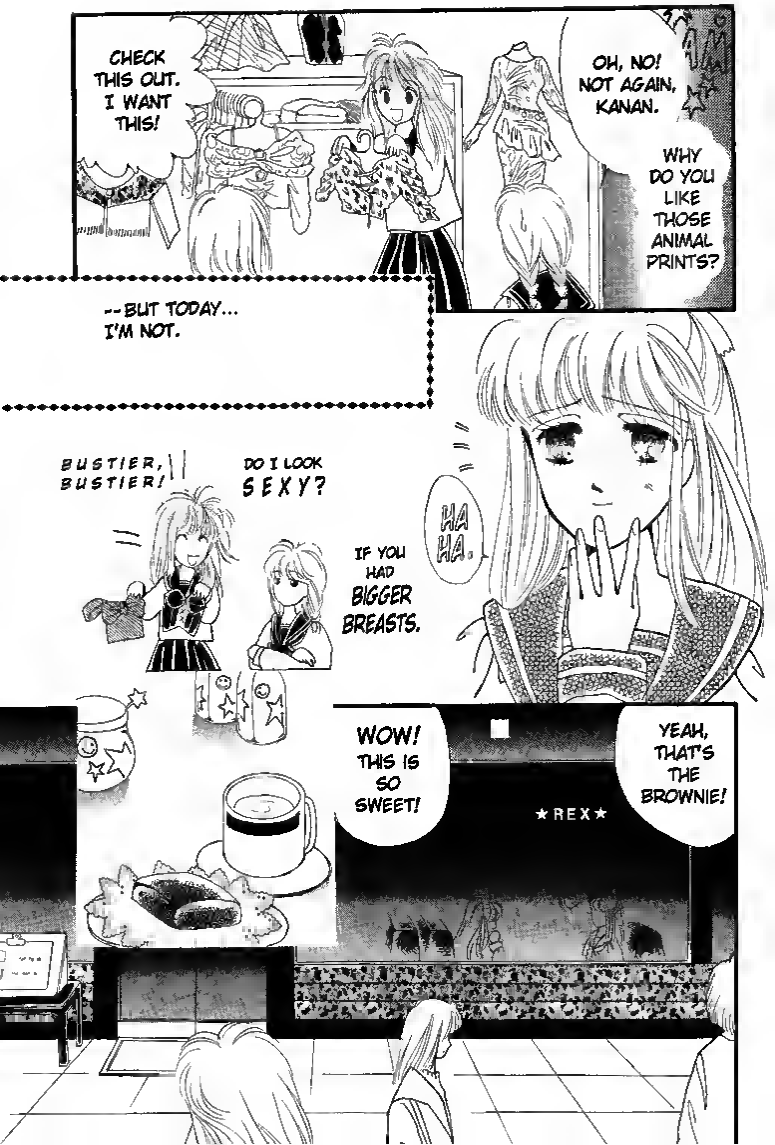

WELL, YOU SEEM FINE, SO YOU'RE COMING TO SCHOOL TO-MORROW, RIGHT?
YEAH ...
ALL RIGHT. SEE YOU LATER,
BYE.


THANKS... ALL THE WAY HERE JUST TO BRING A NOTE-BOOK.
SURE.
I THINK THE REAL REASON SHE CAME BY TO DROP OFF THE NOTEBOOK IS--
--SHE WANTED TO APOLOGIZE TO ME.
I... I MIGHT GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW.
IF I HAD DIED AT THAT TIME... I WOULD NEVER HAVE KNOWN THIS.


HEY! GOOD MORNING, MISS UCHIYAMA! ARE YOU OKAY, NOW?
GOOD MORNING.
KANAN, I'LL SWING BY TO BORROW YOUR DICTIONARY LATER.
THAT GIRL... I'VE SEEN HER SOMEWHERE...


DO YOU WANNA STOP BY REX AFTER SCHOOL? THEY HAVE GOOD BROWNIES.
AN AMERICAN PASTRY CHEF BAKES THEM.
AND I MET A GOOD-LOOKING WAITER WHO WORKS THERE.
UCHIYAMA, YOU'RE COMING! WE WILL HAVE A GET-WELL PARTY FOR YOU!
MARUKOSHI
2F NOW PLAYING


WILL HE--
--BE AT THE AQUARIUM TODAY, TOO?
I'M USUALLY --
--SURROUNDED BY FISH AND DOLPHINS AFTER SCHOOL--

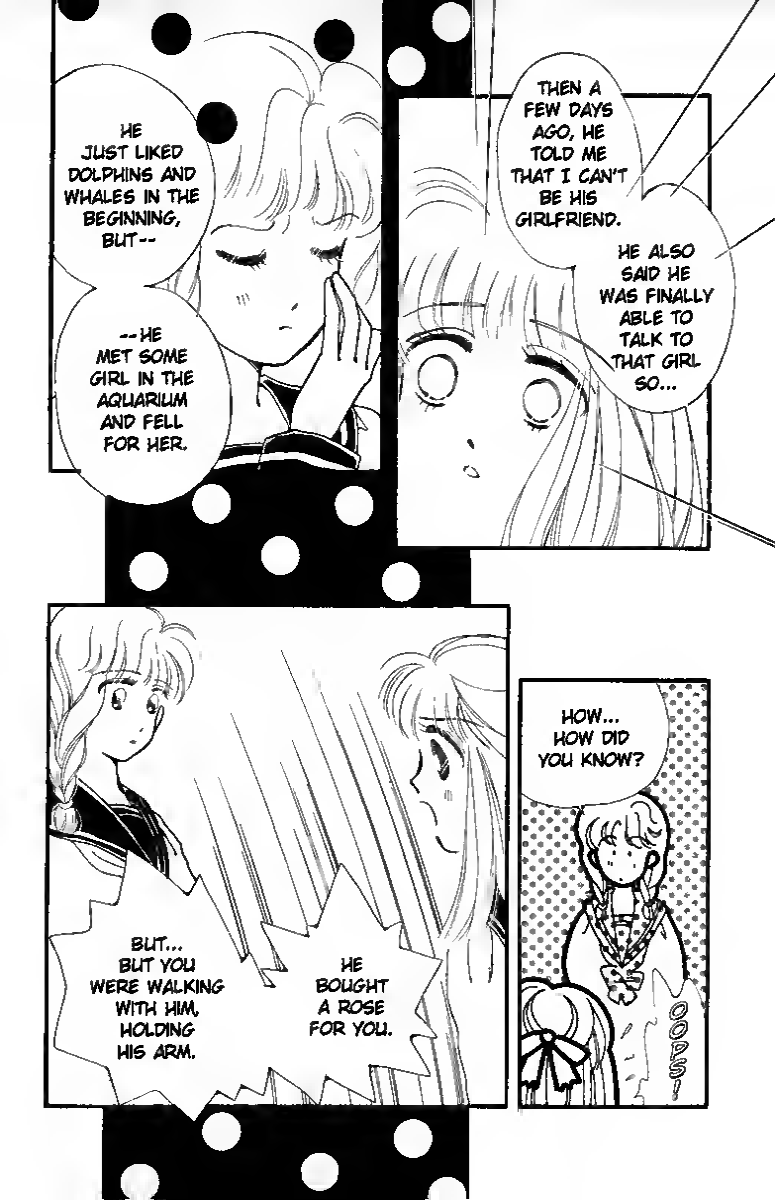

CHECK THIS OUT. I WANT THIS!
OH, NO! NOT AGAIN, KANAN.
WHY DO YOU LIKE THOSE ANIMAL PRINTS?
--BUT TODAY... I'M NOT.
BUSTIER, BUSTIER!
DO I LOOK SEXY?
IF YOU HAD BIGGER BREASTS.
HA HA.
WOW! THIS IS SO SWEET!
YEAH, THAT'S THE BROWNIE!
★REX★

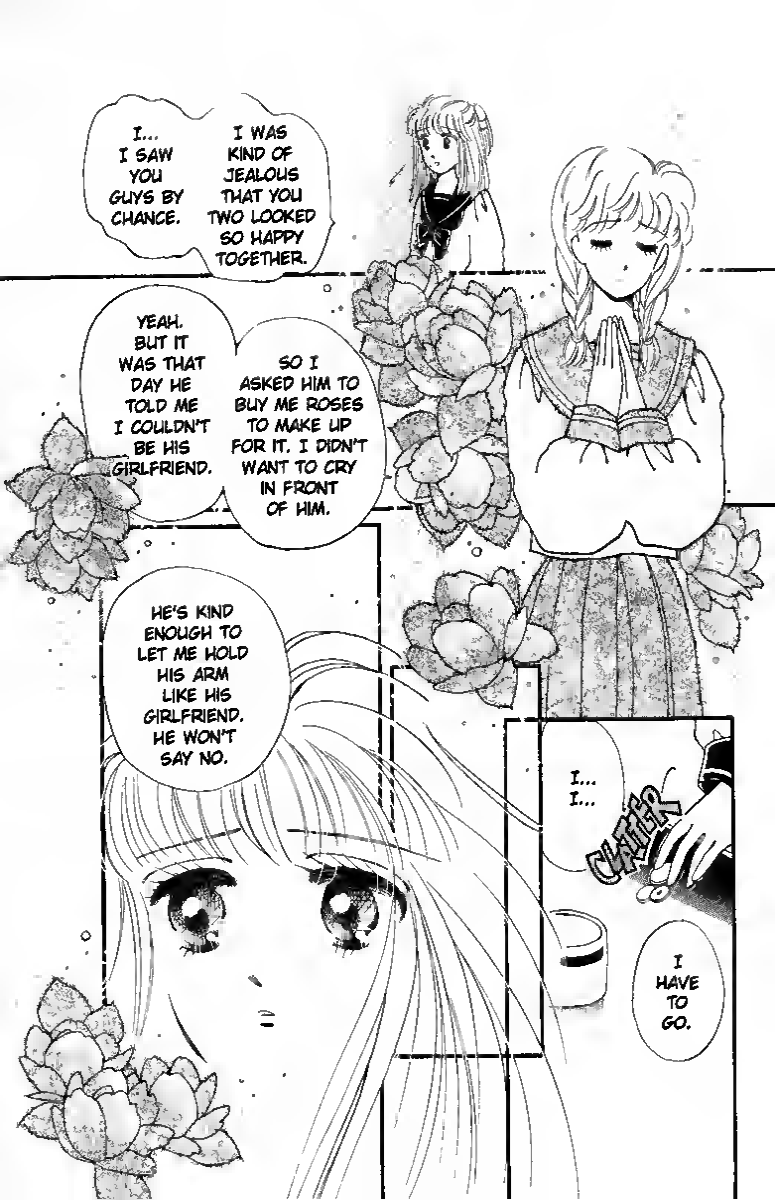
I HAVE TO DIET!
BUT I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT SWEETS!
KANAN, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO COME HERE.
HEY, KANAN! THAT'S NOT THE WAITER YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT, IS IT?!
YEAH! DO YOU HAVE PROBLEM WITH THAT!?
OH, THAT'S HARU.

THAT'S IT! NOW I REMEMBER HER.
SHE'S THE GIRL HE BOUGHT THAT ROSE FOR!
OH, NO! WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
WHAT?!
IS THAT HARU? MARI, BRING HIM IN!
OKAY. ♡
IS HARU THE GUY THAT MARI LIKES?
HER FRIEND FROM JUNIOR HIGH INTRODUCED THEM.

THESE ARE MY FRIENDS.
HI, NICE TO MEET YOU, HARU. WE'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU.
HI, HOW ARE YOU?
MARI TALKS ABOUT YOU ALL THE TIME.
WHAT? I'M SURE SHE HAS NOTHING BUT BAD THINGS TO SAY.
NO, NOT AT ALL. YOU ARE VERY CUTE, JUST LIKE SHE SAID.
COME ON...! GIVE ME A BREAK!!

I HAVE TO GO NOW.
HUH? THE AQUARIUM AGAIN?
YEAH.
WHAT?
WELL,
I'M NOT GOING.
HE GOES TO THE AQUARIUM ALMOST EVERY DAY, RIGHT? DOESN'T HE GET TIRED OF IT?
I KNOW HE'S NOT GOING TO SEE THE FISH, BUT TO SEE GIRLS!
HE'S STRANGE!


HE JUST LIKED DOLPHINS AND WHALES IN THE BEGINNING, BUT--
--HE MET SOME GIRL IN THE AQUARIUM AND FELL FOR HER.
THEN A FEW DAYS AGO, HE TOLD ME THAT I CAN'T BE HIS GIRLFRIEND.
HE ALSO SAID HE WAS FINALLY ABLE TO TALK TO THAT GIRL SO...
BUT... BUT YOU WERE WALKING WITH HIM, HOLDING HIS ARM.
HE BOUGHT A ROSE FOR YOU.
HOW... HOW DID YOU KNOW?
OOPS!


I... I SAW YOU GUYS BY CHANCE.
I WAS KIND OF JEALOUS THAT YOU TWO LOOKED SO HAPPY TOGETHER.
YEAH. BUT IT WAS THAT DAY HE TOLD ME I COULDN'T BE HIS GIRLFRIEND.
SO I ASKED HIM TO BUY ME ROSES TO MAKE UP FOR IT. I DIDN'T WANT TO CRY IN FRONT OF HIM.
HE'S KIND ENOUGH TO LET ME HOLD HIS ARM LIKE HIS GIRLFRIEND. HE WON'T SAY NO.
I... I...
CLATTER
I HAVE TO GO.

YOU'RE GOING HOME ALREADY?
YEAH.
YOU SHOULD STAY.
I KNOW... I KNOW YOU JUST GOT BETTER. SEE YOU LATER THEN.

WELCOME
ENTRANCE
WEREN'T THEIR BROWNIES GOOD? AMERICANS MAKE VERY SWEET PASTRIES.

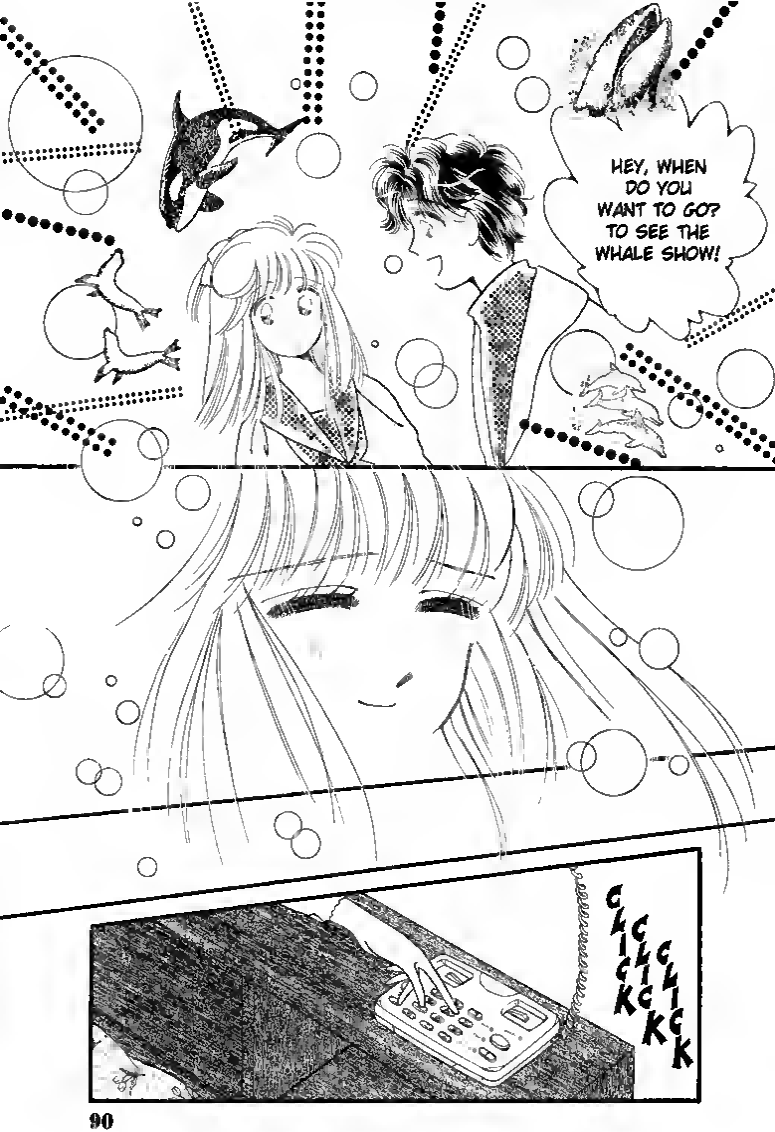
UMM ...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
HE NEVER ASKED ME WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME.
YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO MY FAMILY... TO MY MOTHER.
WHY NOT?
THAT'S YOUR FAMILY'S PROBLEM. I FELT IT WAS NONE OF MY BUSINESS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW CLOSE YOU AND YOUR MOTHER ARE.
HEY, IF YOU WERE BORN AS ONE OF THESE DOLPHINS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

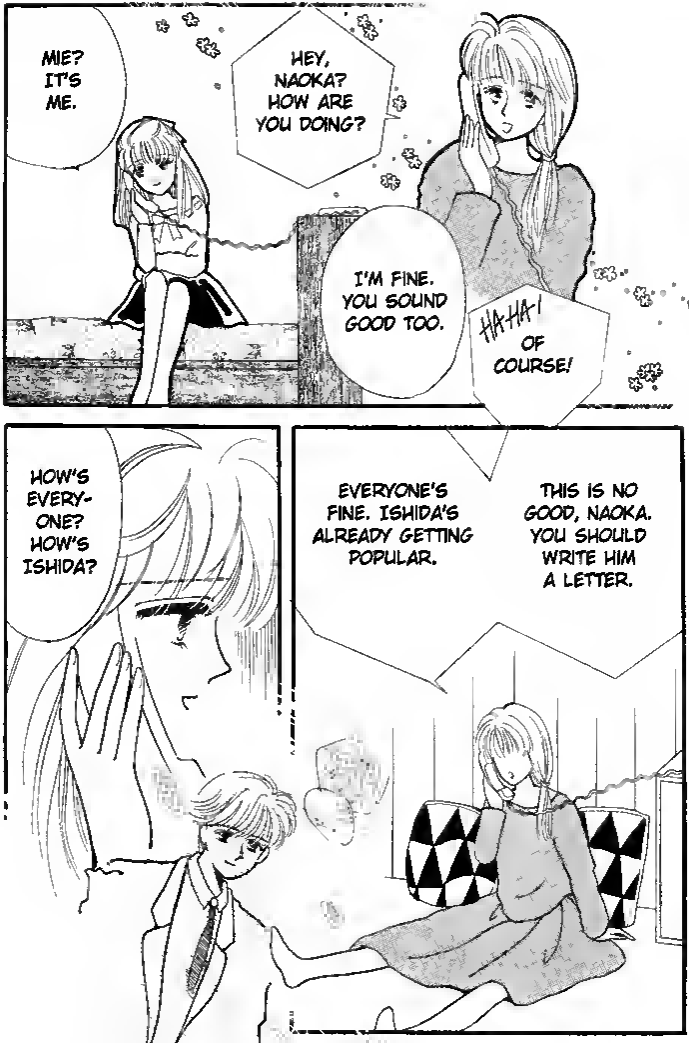
WHAT ?
A DOLPHIN... JUST LIKE ONE OF THESE DOLPHINS CAPTURED HERE.
IF I WAS ONE, I'D LEARN LOTS OF TRICKS--
--AND BECOME POPULAR WITH THE HUMANS.
I COULDN'T GET INTO MY FIRST-CHOICE SCHOOL EITHER. MY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL--
--WAS ALL ABOUT STUDYING FOR THE FUTURE.
THEY ARE VERY INTER-ESTING.
BUT THE SCHOOL I GO TO NOW IS VERY UNIQUE.
THEY DO WHATEVER THEY FEEL LIKE.

I'VE BECOME MORE OPEN MINDED AND DON'T TAKE EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY ANYMORE.
I'VE STARTED TO LIKE PEOPLE AND THINGS I USED TO HATE.
I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND A WAY TO BE HAPPY--
--IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE NOW.
AND EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT--
--YOU CAN ALWAYS THINK OF A WAY TO GET OUT.
BUT NOT THIS WAY...

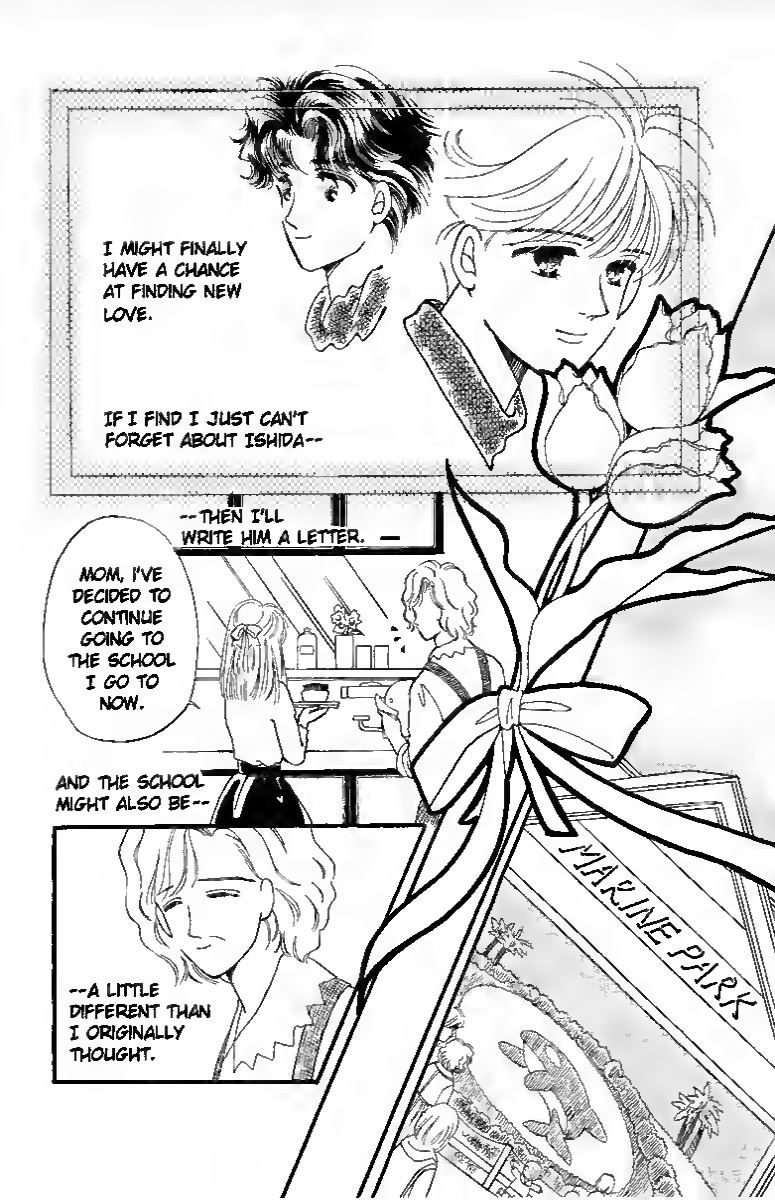
THE DOLPHINS AND FISH HERE...
THEY HAVE NO CHOICE AS TO WHERE THEY CAN SWIM ANYMORE.
BUT YOU...
YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO GET OUT OF THE TANK YOU ARE IN, AND SWIM FREELY IN THE OCEAN.

USAMI...
HE'S JUST
LIKE ME.
EVERYONE
THINKS HE'S
SO BRIGHT AND
EASYGOING BUT--
--HE CRIES
WHEN HE'S
ALONE, TOO.
YOU'RE
RIGHT.


HEY, WHEN DO YOU WANT TO GO? TO SEE THE WHALE SHOW!
CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK


MIE? IT'S ME.
HEY, NAOKA? HOW ARE YOU DOING?
I'M FINE. YOU SOUND GOOD TOO.
HA-HA-! OF COURSE!
HOW'S EVERY-ONE? HOW'S ISHIDA?
EVERYONE'S FINE. ISHIDA'S ALREADY GETTING POPULAR.
THIS IS NO GOOD, NAOKA. YOU SHOULD WRITE HIM A LETTER.

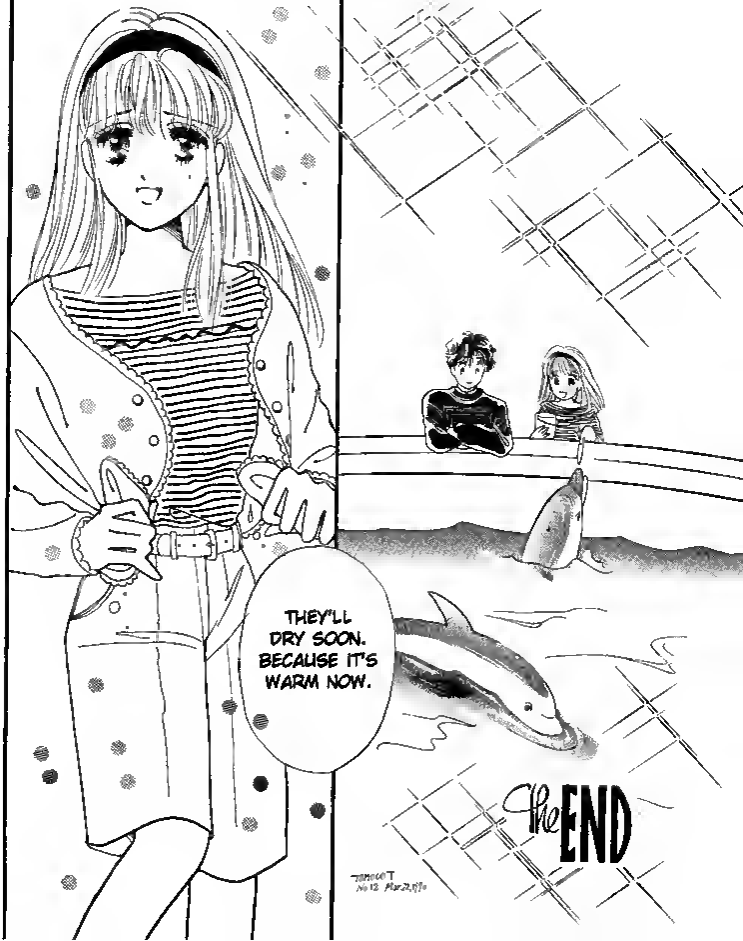
YEAH, MAYBE. BUT I'LL WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.
MAYBE I'LL FIND A NEW BOYFRIEND SOON.
WHAT?! THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAID LAST TIME!!
YOU ALREADY FOUND ONE, DIDN'T YOU?!
YOU DID!! TELL ME! TELL ME!
NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
NAOKA, DO YOU HAVE TIME TOMORROW? WE SHOULD MEET AND CHAT.

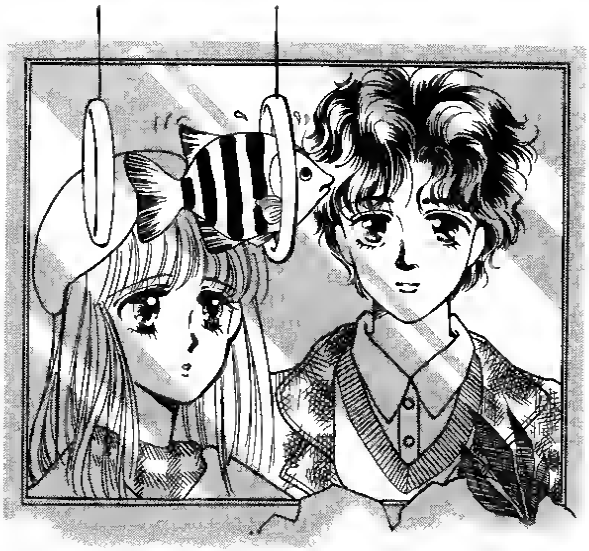

I MIGHT FINALLY HAVE A CHANCE AT FINDING NEW LOVE.
IF I FIND I JUST CAN'T FORGET ABOUT ISHIDA--
--THEN I'LL WRITE HIM A LETTER.
MOM, I'VE DECIDED TO CONTINUE GOING TO THE SCHOOL I GO TO NOW.
AND THE SCHOOL MIGHT ALSO BE--
--A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN I ORIGINALLY THOUGHT.
MARINE PARK

IF YOU'RE SITTING IN THE FRONT ROWS, YOU'RE IN THE SPLASH ZONE.
PLEASE MOVE BACK IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET WET.
DO YOU WANT TO MOVE BACK?
NO WAY.

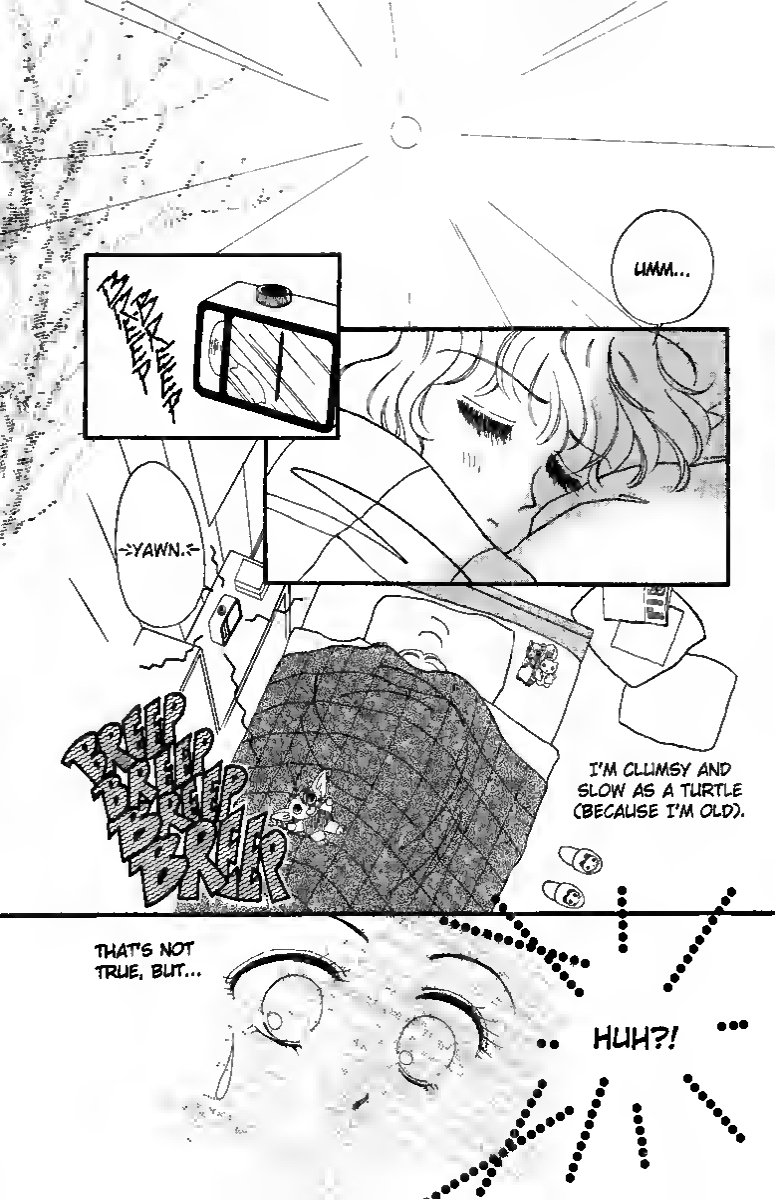
SOMEHOW, I THOUGHT THE KILLER WHALES LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE HAVING FUN. MAYBE THEY'RE THINKING, "I WANT TO BE POPULAR."
SPLASH
LIKE USAMI...

SPLASH
HA HA HA
YIKES!
OH, NO!
WHAT AM I GONNA DO? THIS SWEATER'S EXPENSIVE.
HA HA HA
AT THIS POINT--


--I NOW REALIZE THAT I'VE CAUGHT UP WITH THE CHANGING SEASONS.
THEY'LL DRY SOON. BECAUSE IT'S WARM NOW.
The END



THE FLYING
STEWARDESS


BEEP BEEP BEEP
UMM...
~YAWN.~
BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
I'M CLUMSY AND SLOW AS A TURTLE (BECAUSE I'M OLD).
THAT'S NOT TRUE, BUT...
HUH?!

OH, NO! I HAVE TO BE AT WORK AT EIGHT O'CLOCK THIS MORNING!
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING UNLESS I GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP FIRST.
BR RING IT ON!
THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS JOB IS TO BE FULL OF ENERGY.
OH, NO. IF I'M LATE, I MIGHT MISS MY FLIGHT.

FLIGHT CREW ONLY
HUFF ... PUFF ...
GOOD MORNING, SHOKO.
THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU NEED FOR THIS JOB IS BEAUTY... MAYBE!
GOOD MORNING, MS. SEKI, MS. KANO. YOU BOTH LOOK GREAT AGAIN TODAY.
ALL MY COWORKERS ARE BEAUTIFUL, EVERYONE EXCEPT ME!
HEY, SHOKO! I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND THE FLIGHT TODAY!
HA HA HA
I LOOK FORWARD TO IT! SOUNDS A LITTLE SCARY.

WHAT? I GOT A FAN LETTER.
MUST BE FROM SOME GUY FROM THE TV OR MOVIE INDUSTRY.
HUH? HE SENT ME A TELEPHONE CARD TOO. IT SAYS "CALL ME." OH, NO!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM. JUST USE IT!
WOW! YOU'RE PRETTY POPULAR!
THIS IS BECAUSE OUR JOB IS--
--A JAPANESE GIRL'S DREAM!
OOPS! IT'S TIME FOR OUR BRIEFING.
TODAY'S HEAD STEWARDESS IS MS. OTA. SHE'S PRETTY STRICT.

OMAKE

HI AGAIN.

I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY THIS STORY ABOUT FLIGHT ATTENDANTS. IN JAPAN, BECOMING A STEWARDESS IS ONE OF MANY GIRLS' DREAMS (WELL, BECOMING A CARTOONIST IS EVERY KID'S DREAM). MANY MEN DREAM ABOUT GOING OUT WITH A STEWARDESS. I KNOW THE SITUATION IS DIFFERENT IN THE USA, SO I AM AFRAID AMERICAN READERS WOULD NOT ENJOY THIS STORY...? WHEN I PUBLISHED THIS STORY IN JAPAN, I RECEIVED MANY LETTERS FROM JAPANESE GIRLS SAYING "I'VE DECIDED TO BECOME A STEWARDESS!!" SOME OF MY FRIENDS WORK FOR AIRLINES. ALL OF THE EPISODES IN THIS STORY ARE BASED ON THE TRUE STORIES THAT I HEARD FROM THEM! ACTUALLY, SOME OF THE CHARACTERS ARE BASED ON REAL PEOPLE, TOO.

-TOMOKO

WE ARE THE BRILLIANT STEWARDESSES OF THE SKIES!!
MS. AOKI, CAN YOU CONFIRM TODAY'S SNACK FOODS?
YES. WELL... AH... SOUP AND... UH...
MS. AOKI, YOU'VE BEEN WORKING HERE FOR SIX MONTHS. YOU SHOULD KNOW THESE THINGS BY NOW.
NO MORE "UH'S" AND "AH'S" FROM NOW ON.
--I CAN'T SAY I'M BRILLIANT JUST YET.
I AM STILL NEW AT THIS AND--

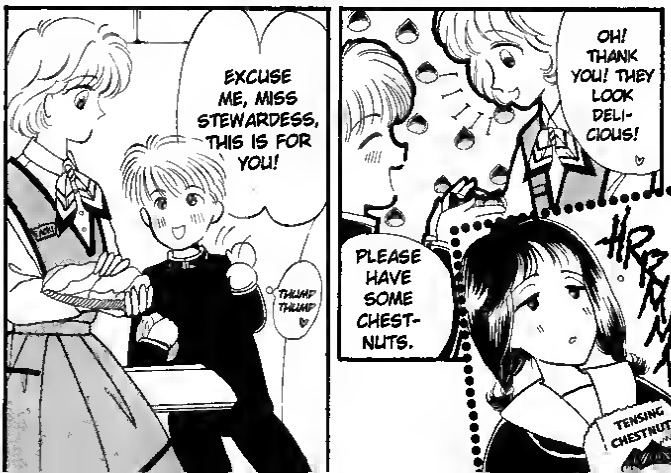
WELL, TODAY'S ROUTE IS... OUR ALTITUDE WILL BE...
Eh, Eh, Eh...
I'VE SEEN YOUNG AND HANDSOME PILOTS ON TV LOVE ROMANCES, BUT--
WOOOOOW!
--THAT'S ONLY ON TV, IN SOAP OPERAS.
THERE ARE ONLY STUBBORN, BALD, MIDDLE-AGED PILOTS IN OUR COMPANY.
MS. KANO! THIS IS THE SPECIAL JAPANESE ROYAL FAMILY GREEN TEA I LOVE TO DRINK.
OH, NO. THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING
LET ME DEMONSTRATE HOW TO MAKE JAPANESE GREEN TEA. THE TEMPERATURE OF THE BOILING WATER HAS TO BE...
CAPTAIN! I REALLY DON'T THINK I CAN MAKE IT PROPERLY.
PLEASE SHOW ME HOW.

WHAT?! MS. KANO, THE CAPTAIN IS MAKING GREEN TEA...?!
HERE WE GO!
HE'S MAKING IT BY HIMSELF.
HOW IS IT? IT'S GOOD, ISN'T IT?
YES, THIS IS REALLY DIFFERENT!
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
THE SENIOR STEWARDESSES KNOW JUST HOW TO TREAT THE STUBBORN CAPTAIN.
AMAZING! SHE HAD HIM MAKE GREEN TEA FOR HER.
WELL, WE SHOULD START LETTING THE PASSENGERS BOARD.
OK!
GOOD MORNING!
GOOD MORNING!
PAT PAT

HE MUST BE A FOREIGN MODEL OR SOME-THING.
I'LL GIVE HIM SUPER SERVICE!!
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO HELP, MS. SEKI.
A SCHOOL TRIP!!
YEAH!
WOW!!
TEACHER!
HEY, LISTEN UP! DON'T RUN!
LOOK! STEWARDESSES!
PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
THIS FLIGHT IS GOING TO BE A BUSY ONE!
WOW! IT'S THE REAL DEAL!

HERE'S A HOT TOWEL FOR YOU!
EXCUSE ME, CAN I ASK YOUR NAME?
MY NAME IS AOKI.
HERE'S A HOT TOWEL ...
HOT TOWEL ...
MY NAME IS AOKI.
MY NAME--
--IS AOKI.
I WISH THEY WOULDN'T TALK TO ME AT TIMES LIKE THESE.
...
SOME-THING WRONG?

CHATTER
CHATTER
I LOVE TONJEN!
I HAD A GREAT TIME AT THE YS CONCERT!
THEY MUST BE IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.
I WAS WEARING A SAILOR UNIFORM TOO, UNTIL JUST LAST YEAR.
WHAT? MI-CHAN IS ALREADY SLEEPING?!
OH, CHESTNUTS! LET'S EAT THEM!
TENSING CHESTNUTS


EXCUSE ME, MISS STEWARDESS, THIS IS FOR YOU!
THUMP THUMP
OH! THANK YOU! THEY LOOK DELICIOUS!
PLEASE HAVE SOME CHESTNUTS.
HRMMM...
TENSING CHESTNUTS

HEY! MY CHESTNUTS ARE ALL GONE!
HEH, HEH DELICIOUS
I CAN'T GIVE THESE BACK TO HER NOW.
HUH?
I CAN'T STAND THESE PASSENGERS WHO SAY MY NAME LIKE WE'RE OLD FRIENDS OR SOMETHING.
MS. AOKI?
YES.
YES, IT IS YOU! MS. AOKI!!

IT'S ME! ME!
WHAT?!! EGAWA?!
E...EGAWA, YOU'RE A COLLEGE STUDENT NOW, RIGHT? IT'S BEEN A WHILE... SINCE GRADUATION.
WOW..... I KNOW I'M TURNING RED.
OH, NO!
WOW! I'D HEARD RUMORS ABOUT YOU, BUT YOU REALLY ARE A STEWARDESS!

OH, YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT, EGAWA.
ONE OF MY FORMER CLASSMATES IS ON MY FLIGHT!? THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IT'S HAPPENED SINCE I STARTED THIS JOB. AND WHAT'S MORE--
YOU LOOK GOOD IN THAT UNIFORM!
--I KIND OF LIKED HIM.
ARE YOU GOING TO SAPPORO FOR FUN?
YEAH. WITH THIS FRIEND OF MINE FROM SCHOOL. HIS PARENTS' HOME IS NEAR THE TEINE SKI AREA.
UMM... EXCUSE ME.
I HAVE TO GO. SEE YOU LATER.
SOUNDS LIKE FUN! I'LL BE STAYING IN SAPPORO TONIGHT--
--BUT I'LL BE HEADING BACK TO TOKYO TOMORROW.

PLEASE, HOLD IT IN!
HE GOT AIRSICK.
HOW ABOUT SOME AIR?
CLICK
DO YOU WANT TEA?
SOME CANDY ?
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME HE'S FLOWN.
SEE! LOOK AT ALL THE CHARMS!!
HIS FACE IS JUST LIKE AN EXCITED PARAKEET.
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT I THINK YOU SHOULD HOLD THEM IN YOUR HANDS.
OTHER-WISE YOUR SHOULDERS CRAMP UP AND YOU FEEL SICK.

OH, YEAH!
JANA...
EGAWA, HERE YOU GO.
THIS IS A GIFT FOR KIDS.
WOW! THANK YOU.
TH...THANK YOU.
HOW DO YOU FEEL? HERE'S SOME WATER AND CANDY.
DO YOU WANT TO MOVE TO A WINDOW SEAT?
YOU'RE LUCKY. SHE'S BEING SO NICE TO YOU.
HA HA. I'M NOT REALLY IN THE MOOD TO THINK ABOUT IT NOW.
NA....

HERE ARE POSTCARDS FOR YOU GUYS.
YEAH! THANK YOU!
WOULD YOU LIKE A BLANKET?
WOW!
LMM...
WHICH DO YOU WANT?
ULTRA-MAN
WHALES

THANK YOU.
SMILE!
HEY, YOU! YOU! ARE YOU STAYING IN SAPPORO TONIGHT?
HERE'S MY BUSINESS CARD. I'LL SHOW YOU A GOOD RESTAURANT IF YOU LIKE.
DAMN! GUYS GIVE US THEIR BUSINESS CARDS JUST BECAUSE WE'RE STEWARD-ESSES.
SHOKO, YOU'RE NEW HERE SO YOU TAKE CARE OF THIS.
SLIP
NNOOOO!! I DON'T WANT THIS.
CAPTAIN, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?
SIP SIP
YES, PLEASE, MS. KANO. COULD YOU MAKE ME THAT SPECIAL ROYAL FAMILY GREEN TEA?
WHAT A PAIN!
WHAT!? MS. KANO, THAT'S A REGULAR TEA BAG!
MMM... GOOD, THIS TEA REALLY IS DIFFERENT.
YEAH!
WHAT'S THE DIFFER-ENCE?

HEY, DO YOU HAVE TIME TO GO TO DINNER TONIGHT?
LET'S GO HAVE HOKKAIDO NOODLES.
WOW! THIS IS GREAT!
HOKKAIDO NOODLES AND EGAWA... WHAT AN INCREDIBLE TEMPTATION!
AH...I HAVE THREE FLIGHTS TODAY SO--
--I'LL BE EXHAUSTED BY THEN.
HANEDA TO CHITOSE, BACK TO HANEDA, THEN BACK TO CHITOSE.
I SEE. THAT'S TOO BAD. BACK WHEN WE WERE IN SCHOOL--
--WE HUNG OUT AND SNACKED ON SOMETHING EVERY DAY AFTER CLASSES.

ALL OUR FRIENDS GOT TOGETHER--
--FOR DONUTS, HAMBURGERS, AND FRIED CHICKEN.
WE ATE SOMETHING DIFFERENT EVERYDAY.
I KNEW YOU GUYS WOULD BE HERE. IT FELT LIKE A KFC DAY.
WE WERE ALL IN DIFFERENT AFTER SCHOOL SPORTS, BUT SOMEHOW WE ALWAYS GOT TOGETHER AFTER.
WE WERE IN THE SAME CLASSROOMS ALL DAY, EVERY DAY BUT--
POKE.
HEE HEE HEE.
--WHENEVER I THOUGHT THERE WAS A CHANCE I'D SEE HIM AGAIN AFTER SCHOOL, I COULD NEVER GO STRAIGHT HOME.

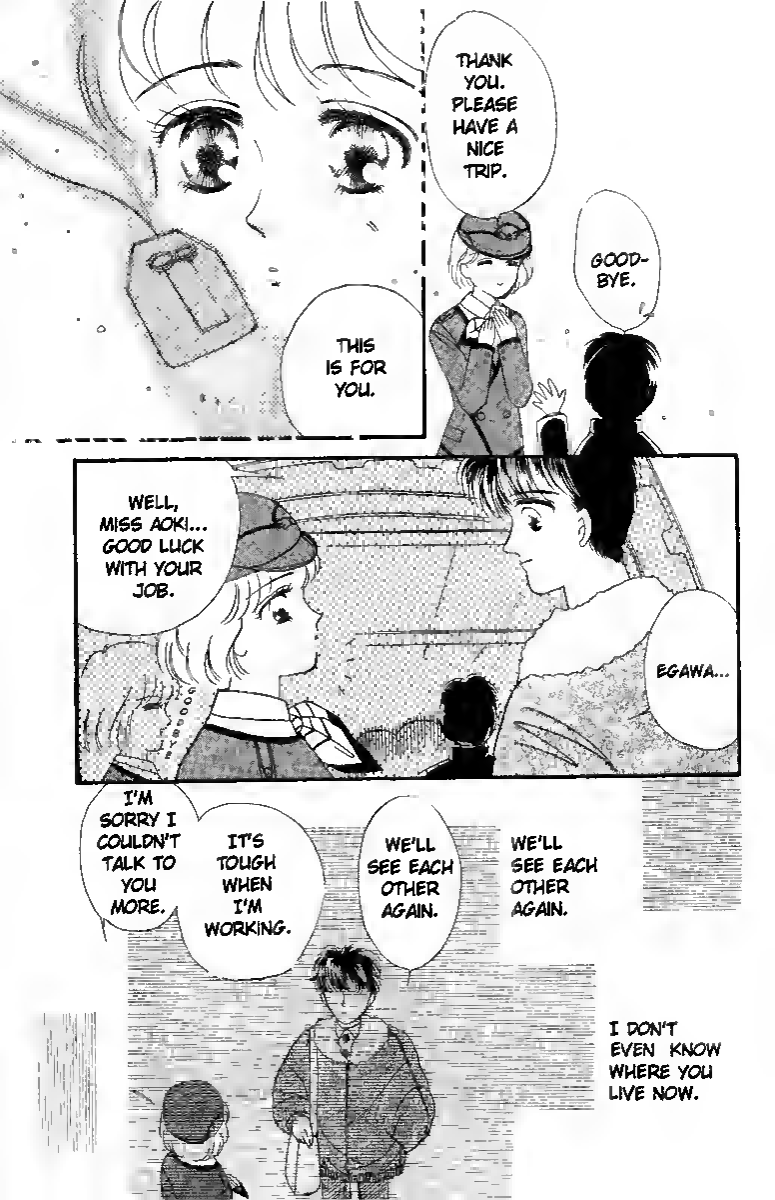
HEH HEH
SHOKO, YOU JUST LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE IN SOME SHOJO MANGA.
IS THAT GUY IN 4BC A FRIEND OF YOURS?
WOW! YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN IN SAPPORO TONIGHT, AREN'T YOU!
YAAA

--LOOKS!!
I DON'T CARE HOW POOR HE IS AS LONG AS HE'S HANDSOME!
IT'S SAD THAT THEY ASK ME OUT ON DATES JUST BECAUSE I'M A STEWARD-ESS.
BUT ANYWAY ...
YEAH, I'M SURE YOU ARE.
I... I'M JUST JOKING. HA HA HA!
EXCUSE ME...
HOWEVER, I CANNOT DENY THAT BEING A STEWARDESS IS ONE PART OF MYSELF...IT'S A DIFFICULT SITUATION.

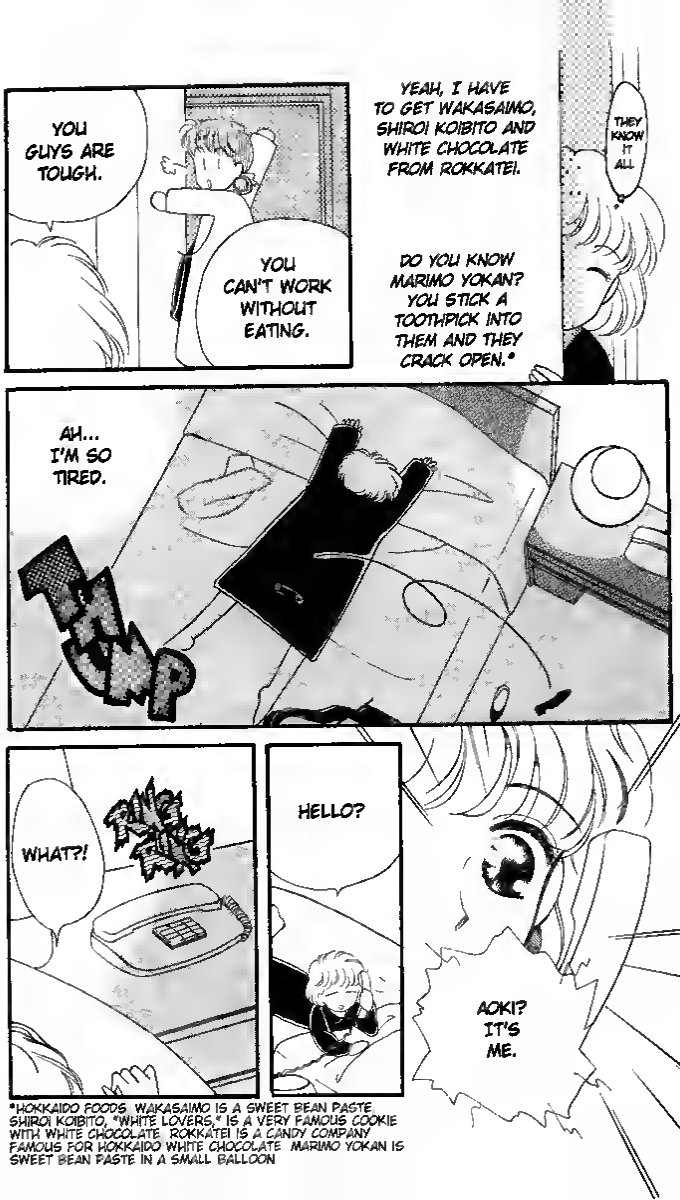
I LIKE MEETING PEOPLE ON MY DAYS OFF.
RIGHT. BUT WE'RE SO BUSY WITH WORK, WE REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY TIME OFF NOW.
YES! SHOKO, YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.
BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? MARI KANO FOUND ONE. SO WHY CAN'T WE?
HEH HEH
EXCUSE ME, I WANT TO BE A STEWARD-ESS.
JUST LIKE YOU.
CAN I SEND YOU A LETTER?

I'M ALWAYS HAPPY MEETING BOYS AND GIRLS WHO LIKE ME.
THANK YOU.
GOOD LUCK! EAT A LOT AND SLEEP WELL. KEEP UP YOUR HEALTH AND YOU'LL BE A STEWARDESS SOMEDAY.
ME TOO! CAN I HAVE YOUR PHONE NUMBER?
HEH!
YAY!
NOT FOR YOU GUYS!
NO! NOT LIKE THAT.
JANA
SHOKO ASAI
EXCUSE ME, CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH ON THIS POSTCARD?
HMM...
I CAN'T DO THAT.
I WANT THE QUICK, MESSY KIND OF AUTOGRAPH.
LIKE HOW A CELEBRITY SIGNS.
WOW! YOU'RE PRETTY POPULAR, HUH?
NOOOOO. WE GET THESE CRAZY PASSENGERS SOMETIMES.
PAT PAT

THANK YOU.
SEE YOU AGAIN SOON.
GOODBYE. HAVE A GREAT TRIP.
SUFFLE SUFFLE
PLEASE SHAKE OUR HANDS.
HAHAHA
THE SICK KID. (HE'S HANDSOME.)
WELL... THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
UMM... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT NOW?
YES. I'M FINE.
AH... THIS...


THANK YOU. PLEASE HAVE A NICE TRIP.
GOOD-BYE.
THIS IS FOR YOU.
WELL, MISS AOKI... GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR JOB.
EGAWA...
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T TALK TO YOU MORE.
IT'S TOUGH WHEN I'M WORKING.
WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.
WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE NOW.

TAKE CARE.
WELL... WHAT LUCK! JUST TO MEET HIM BY CHANCE LIKE THAT..
I'M SURE I'LL SEE HIM AT A REUNION SOMEDAY.
JAMA HOTEL
SHOKO, YOU'RE COMING WITH US, RIGHT?
I'M EXHAUSTED. I'LL PASS TODAY.
CLICK
HAVE YOU TRIED THE HOKKAIDO NOODLES WITH SCALLOPS AND CRAB? IT'S SO GOOD!
REALLY? BUT I CAN'T PASS UP THE HOKKAIDO NOODLES WITH CORN AND BUTTER.


YOU GUYS ARE TOUGH.
YOU CAN'T WORK WITHOUT EATING.
YEAH, I HAVE TO GET WAKASAIMO, SHIROI KOIBITO AND WHITE CHOCOLATE FROM ROKKATEI.
DO YOU KNOW MARIMO YOKAN? YOU STICK A TOOTHPICK INTO THEM AND THEY CRACK OPEN.*
THEY KNOW IT ALL
AH... I'M SO TIRED.
FLOP
WHAT?!
RING RING
HELLO?
AOKI? IT'S ME.

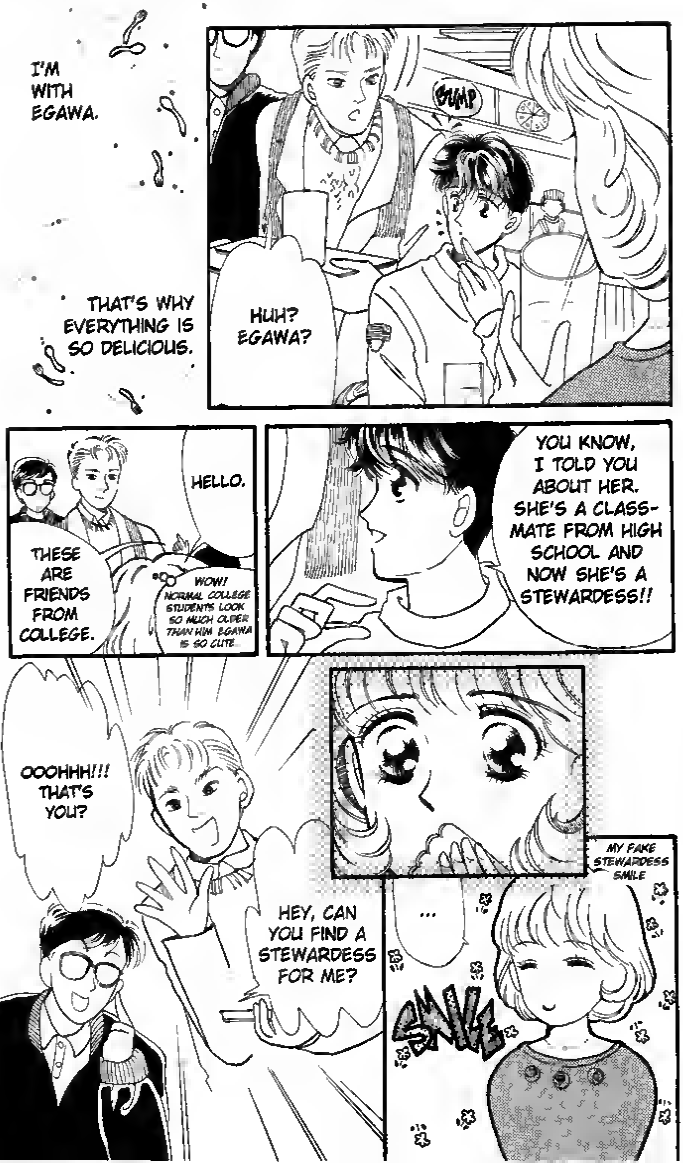
*HOKKAIDO FOODS. WAKASAIMO IS A SWEET BEAN PASTE SHIROI KOIBITO, "WHITE LOVERS," IS A VERY FAMOUS COOKIE WITH WHITE CHOCOLATE. ROKKATEI IS A CANDY COMPANY FAMOUS FOR HOKKAIDO WHITE CHOCOLATE. MARIMO YOKAN IS SWEET BEAN PASTE IN A SMALL BALLOON

DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY LEFT TO COME DOWN TO THE LOBBY?
WHOOOSH
EGAWA?!
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE STAYING AT THE JANA HOTEL.
HEY! OVER HERE.
WHAT A SURPRISE!
SEEING YOU REALLY BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYBODY SINCE GRADUATION. EXCEPT YOU.

I HAVEN'T EVEN HAD TIME TO THINK ABOUT HIM.
YEAH? ME NEITHER.
I'VE BEEN SO BUSY SINCE I GOT THIS JOB AS A STEWARD-ESS.
I HEARD IT'S PRETTY HARD TO BECOME A STEWARDESS. ESPECIALLY RIGHT AFTER JUST GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL. BUT YOU DID IT.
I DIDN'T THINK I WAS GOING TO PASS THE INTERVIEW. SO I WASN'T NERVOUS AT ALL. THAT REALLY HELPED, I THINK.
REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!
HA HA. I'M GLAD EGAWA'S SMILING SO MUCH.
I RESPECT YOU FOR THAT.

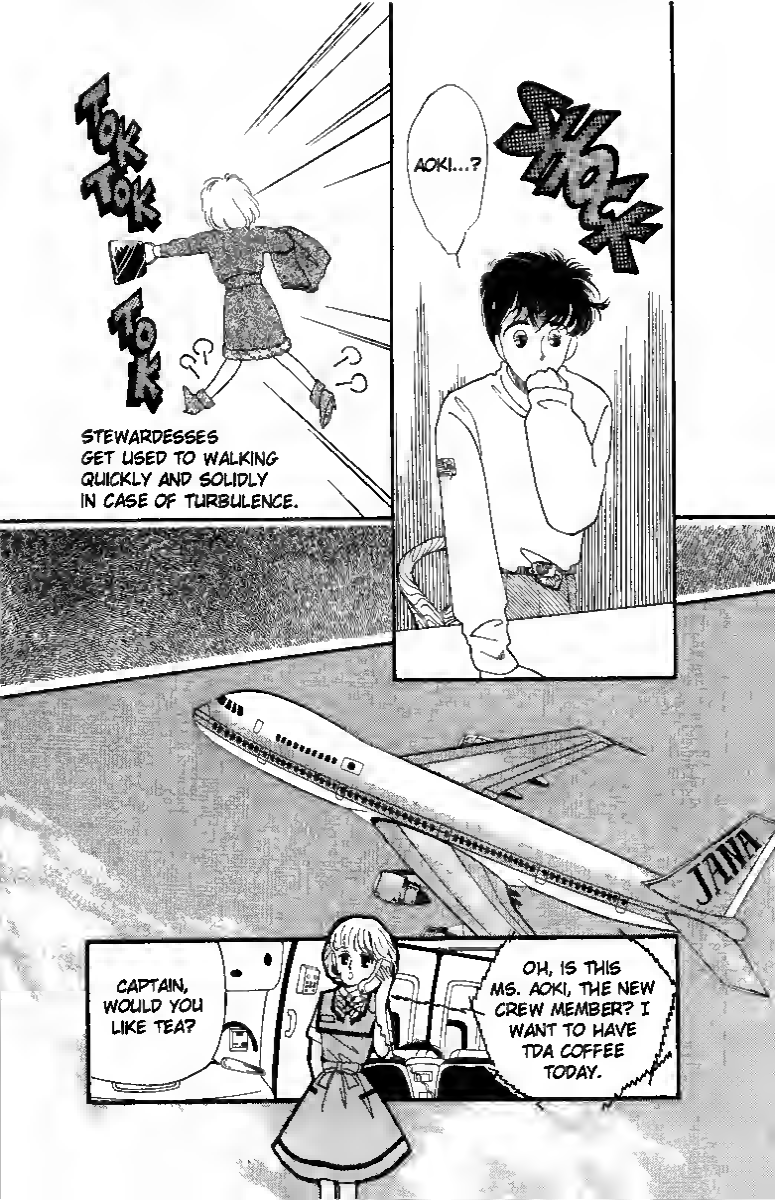
HE'S THE SAME. JUST LIKE WHEN WE WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL.
HE SMILES LIKE A LITTLE BOY.
WE'LL BE LANDING AT CHITOSE AIRPORT SHORTLY.
SHOCK
WHAT?
WHAT? CHITOSE?!
OH, NO. I GOOFED.
I'M VERY SORRY. WE'LL BE LANDING AT HANEDA AIRPORT SHORTLY.
PHEWWW...WHAT A SURPRISE! I THOUGHT WE WERE BACK IN SAPPORO.
YOU'VE BEEN VERY FLIGHTY SINCE YESTERDAY.
I REMEMBER YOU DOING THE SAME THING BEFORE, MS SEKI

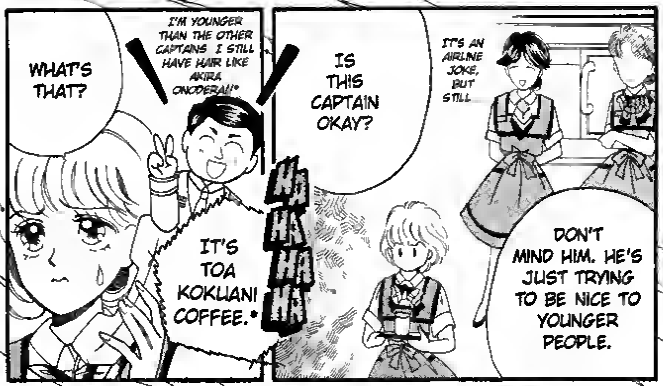
I GOT--
--HIS NUMBER.
ADDRESS
I CAN SEE HIM ANYTIME NOW.
HEY! SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
YOU STILL EAT A LOT.
I'M SO HAPPY TO BE WITH HIM, EATING SUCH GOOD FOOD.
PIZZA
LUNCH TIME 11:00 ~2:00
WE'RE JUST LIKE WE WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL
IT'S ALL YOU CAN EAT, SO CHOW DOWN!


I'M WITH EGAWA.
THAT'S WHY EVERYTHING IS SO DELICIOUS.
BUMP
HUH? EGAWA?
HELLO.
THESE ARE FRIENDS FROM COLLEGE.
WOW! NORMAL COLLEGE STUDENTS LOOK SO MUCH CUTER THAN HIM. EGAWA IS SO CUTE.
YOU KNOW, I TOLD YOU ABOUT HER. SHE'S A CLASSMATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND NOW SHE'S A STEWARDESS!!
OOOHHH!!! THAT'S YOU?
HEY, CAN YOU FIND A STEWARDESS FOR ME?
...
MY FAKE STEWARDESS SMILE
SNIGG

MY COWORKERS DON'T LIKE THESE TYPES OF GUYS.
IF I INTRODUCED THEM, I'M SURE THEY'D GET UPSET.
YOU'RE SO LUCKY! HOW DID YOU DO IT? YOU GOT A GIRLFRIEND WHO'S A STEWARDESS. AWESOME!
I GUESS I BRAGGED A BIT.
HA HA. I TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT YOU.
NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
WAIT. MAYBE EGAWA MIGHT--
--BE SEEING ME JUST BECAUSE I'M A STEWARD-ESS.
See You Later
THEY ALL WANTED TO MEET YOU WHEN I TOLD THEM YOU WERE A STEWARD-ESS.

I DON'T DRINK ALCOHOL.
WE SHOULD ALL GO OUT FOR A DRINK SOMETIME.
BRING YOUR FRIENDS!
I NEVER SAID THAT ALL MY FRIENDS WERE STEWARDESSES.
AO...
I'VE HAD ENOUGH, THANK YOU.
I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE. EXCUSE ME.
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE A STEWARDESS?


TOK TOK TOK
STEWARDESSES GET USED TO WALKING QUICKLY AND SOLIDLY IN CASE OF TURBULENCE.
AOKI...?
JANA
CAPTAIN, WOULD YOU LIKE TEA?
OH, IS THIS MS. AOKI, THE NEW CREW MEMBER? I WANT TO HAVE TDA COFFEE TODAY.


WHAT'S THAT?
I'M YOUNGER THAN THE OTHER CAPTAINS. I STILL HAVE HAIR LIKE AKIRA ONODERA!!*
IT'S TOA KOKUAN! COFFEE.*
HA HA HA HA
IS THIS CAPTAIN OKAY?
IT'S AN AIRLINE JOKE, BUT STILL...
DON'T MIND HIM. HE'S JUST TRYING TO BE NICE TO YOUNGER PEOPLE.

*JAPANESE ACTOR

*TOA AIRLINE IS A DOMESTIC JAPANESE AIRLINE. KOKUNAI MEANS "DOMESTIC" AND ALSO "NOT STRONG" (COFFEE), SO TOA COFFEE MEANS "NOT STRONG COFFEE"

I WAS KIND OF UPSET.

I NOW SEE EGAWA AS THE KIND OF PERSON WHO PASSES HIS BUSINESS CARDS AROUND FREELY TO THE OTHER STEWARDESSES.

I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN EGAWA WOULD JUST SIT, LISTEN TO ME, AND SMILE.

WOULD YOU LIKE A SAND-WICH?
BUT EVEN THOUGH I FEEL BAD TODAY--
--I STILL HAVE TO KEEP SMILING. I'M PROUD OF MYSELF.
WOULD YOU LIKE A SAND-WICH?
REPEAT X 1,000,000!!
BRRRING BRRING
I'M GLAD I CAUGHT YOU. ARE YOU OFF TODAY? I'VE BEEN CALLING YOU, BUT YOU'RE NEVER HOME.
I'VE BEEN WORKING LATE AND STAYING OUT.
HELLO.
AOKI? IT'S EGAWA.

WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME?
NOTHING.
I'M PRETTY EXHAUSTED.
BUT NOT FROM HAVING FUN AND PARTYING LIKE A STUDENT.
FLIP FLIP
I UNDER-STAND THAT BEING A STEWARD-ESS IS VERY HARD WORK.
I USED TO THINK THAT A STEWARDESS WAS JUST A FLYING WAITRESS, BUT...
GGGRRRRRR

HOW RUDE! WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? I'M GONNA HANG UP NOW.
WAIT! LISTEN...
AFTER I SAW YOU WORKING, I NOW HAVE A NEW RESPECT FOR
WHAT A STEWARD-ESS DOES. YOU WERE SO GREAT!
I THINK YOU FOUND A GREAT JOB THAT'S PERFECT FOR YOU.
EAT A LOT OF GOOD FOOD AND WORK HARD.

IN THE BEGINNING--

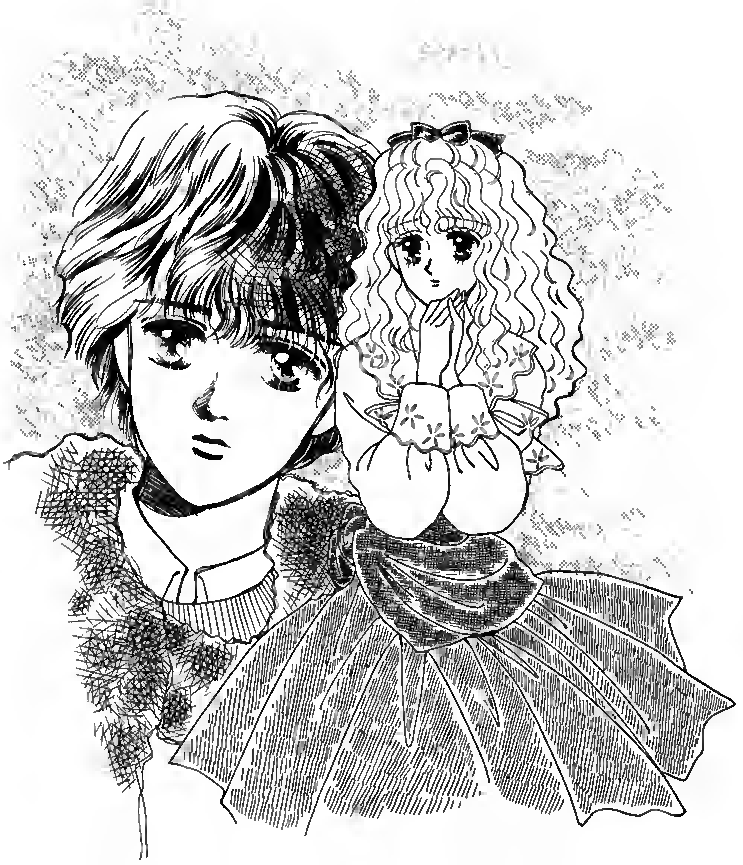
--WE ALWAYS GOT TOGETHER AND ATE A LOT AFTER SCHOOL, THAT'S WHY--
ARE YOU GONNA EAT ALL THAT?
THANKS, EGAWA!!
?
HUH? I JUST DON'T UNDER-STAND AOKI
--I BECAME A HEALTHY STEWARDESS

HELLO, EVERYONE!
GOOD MORNING!
YOU'RE EARLY TODAY AND FULL OF ENERGY!! IT'S COLD!
BECAUSE TODAY'S FLIGHT IS TO OKINAWA. WHAT FUN!!
WOW! THAT'S WHITE TIGER FUR. IS IT REAL?
OF COURSE IT'S FAKE. CALL ME SIEGFRIED AND ROY.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOTTEN OVER YOUR PROBLEM.
YES.

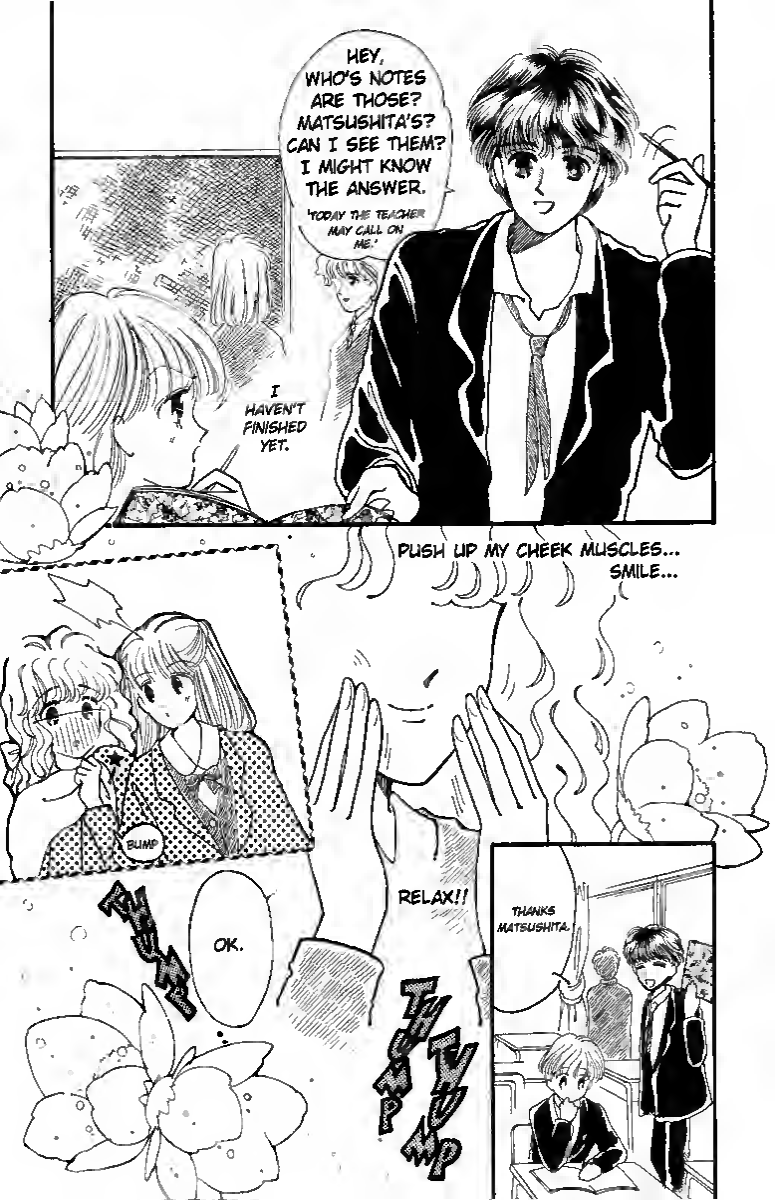
IS THAT A FAN LETTER?
HUH? A LETTER?
Hello! I was on one of your flights. You looked very pretty...
OH, FROM THAT GIRL ON THE SCHOOL TRIP.
I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF BECOMING A STEWARDESS SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
I HADN'T FLOWN FOR A LONG TIME AND THEN I SAW YOU.
IT REMINDED ME HOW MUCH I WANTED TO BE A STEWARDESS LIKE YOU.
I WOULD LIKE TO FLY WITH YOU AGAIN, NEXT TIME BY YOUR SIDE, AS A FELLOW STEWARDESS.

HA
HA...
YOU KNOW WHAT... UP HERE, ABOVE THE CLOUDS--
--IT'S ALWAYS CLEAR AND BRIGHT.
The END

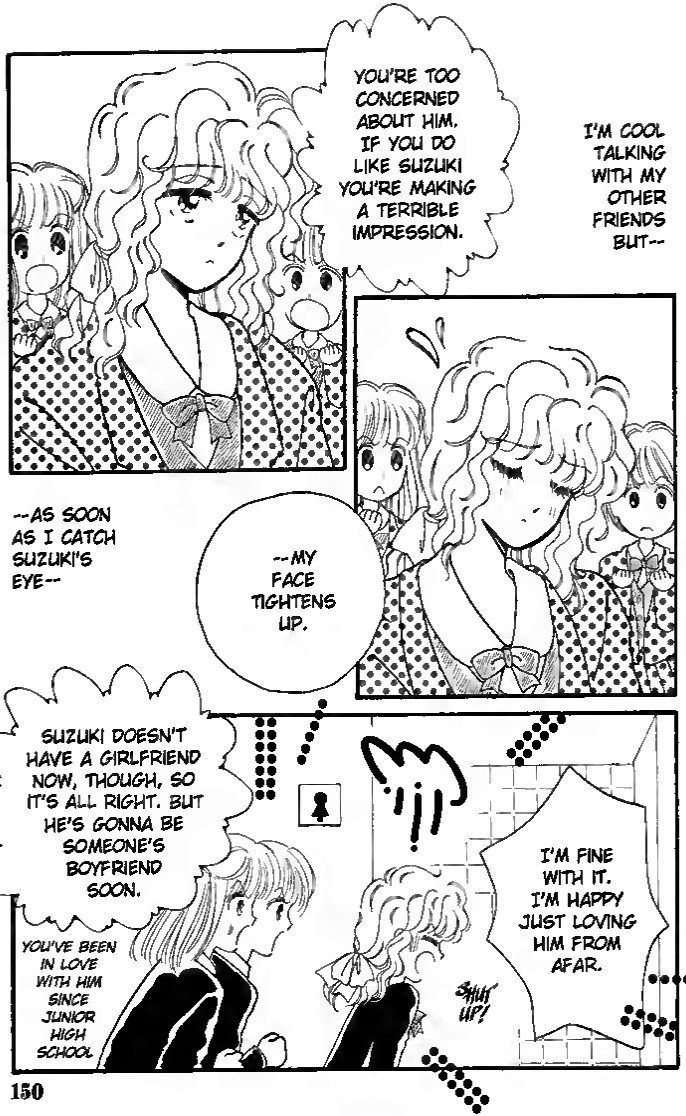
The heart is your kingdom



SNIFF
GOOD MORNING. BBRRR... IT'S SO COLD.
OOH! YOUR HANDS ARE WARM.
YOUR HAIR IS FROZEN. YOU WASHED YOUR HAIR THIS MORNING.
KOKO, DID YOU DO THE MATH HOME-WORK? CAN I SEE IT?


HEY, WHO'S NOTES ARE THOSE? MATSUSHITA'S? CAN I SEE THEM? I MIGHT KNOW THE ANSWER.
'TODAY THE TEACHER MAY CALL ON ME.'
I HAVEN'T FINISHED YET.
PUSH UP MY CHEEK MUSCLES... SMILE...
BUMP
RELAX!!
OK.
THANKS MATSUSHITA.

AAUGH!!!
FROWN
YOU ALWAYS LOOK SO ANGRY WHENEVER YOU SEE HIM.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, KOKO! WHY DO YOU ALWAYS DO THAT?
I MEAN... COME ON...


YOU'RE TOO CONCERNED ABOUT HIM. IF YOU DO LIKE SUZUKI YOU'RE MAKING A TERRIBLE IMPRESSION.
I'M COOL TALKING WITH MY OTHER FRIENDS BUT--
--AS SOON AS I CATCH SUZUKI'S EYE--
--MY FACE TIGHTENS UP.
SUZUKI DOESN'T HAVE A GIRLFRIEND NOW, THOUGH, SO IT'S ALL RIGHT. BUT HE'S GONNA BE SOMEONE'S BOYFRIEND SOON.
YOU'VE BEEN IN LOVE WITH HIM SINCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
I'M FINE WITH IT. I'M HAPPY JUST LOVING HIM FROM AFAR.
SHUT UP!

WHACK
OOPS! I'M SORRY.
DID YOU SEE THAT? KOKO, HONDA JUST GLARED AT YOU.
WHAT?! WHY ME?
DID YOU NOTICE SHE WAS ALWAYS CARRYING A BIG BAG AROUND UNTIL CHRISTMAS?
SHE WAS KNITTING A PAIR OF SCARVES.
AND THE GUY WHO GOT ONE OF THE SCARVES IS... IT'S JUST A RUMOR BUT--

--IT WAS SUZUKI.
THERE ARE LOTS OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU LOVE SUZUKI. EXCEPT HE DOESN'T KNOW.
IT'S BEEN A LONG-TERM, ONE-SIDED LOVE SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
I THINK HONDA MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT.
YOU SHOULD HAVE GIVEN HIM SOME-THING.
DON'T MAKE ME TELL YOU THE SAME THING EVERY YEAR.

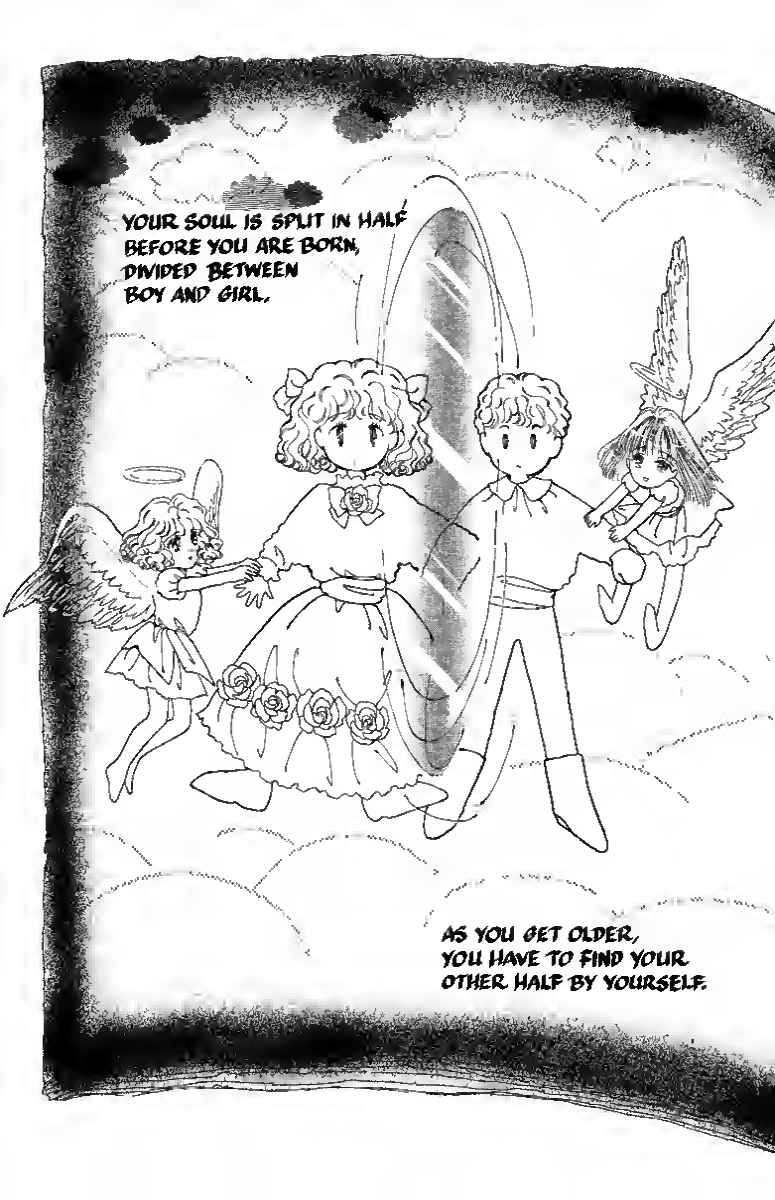
IF I TELL HIM HOW I HONESTLY FEEL...
I'M AFRAID HE'S GOING TO SAY "NO." I'M AFRAID I'LL GET HURT.
VALENTINE'S DAY, CHRISTMAS, HIS BIRTHDAY...
I NEVER DO ANYTHING...
I CAN'T EVEN SMILE AT HIM EVERY DAY.
SPEAKING OF LOVE, SEIKO, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PLANNED CHRISTMAS CONFESSION?
IT'S BEEN POST-PONED UNTIL VALENTINE'S DAY.
WHAT'S THAT? YOU SIT THERE AND LECTURE ME, BUT YOU'RE EXACTLY THE SAME!
PHEWWW IT'S WARM IN HERE

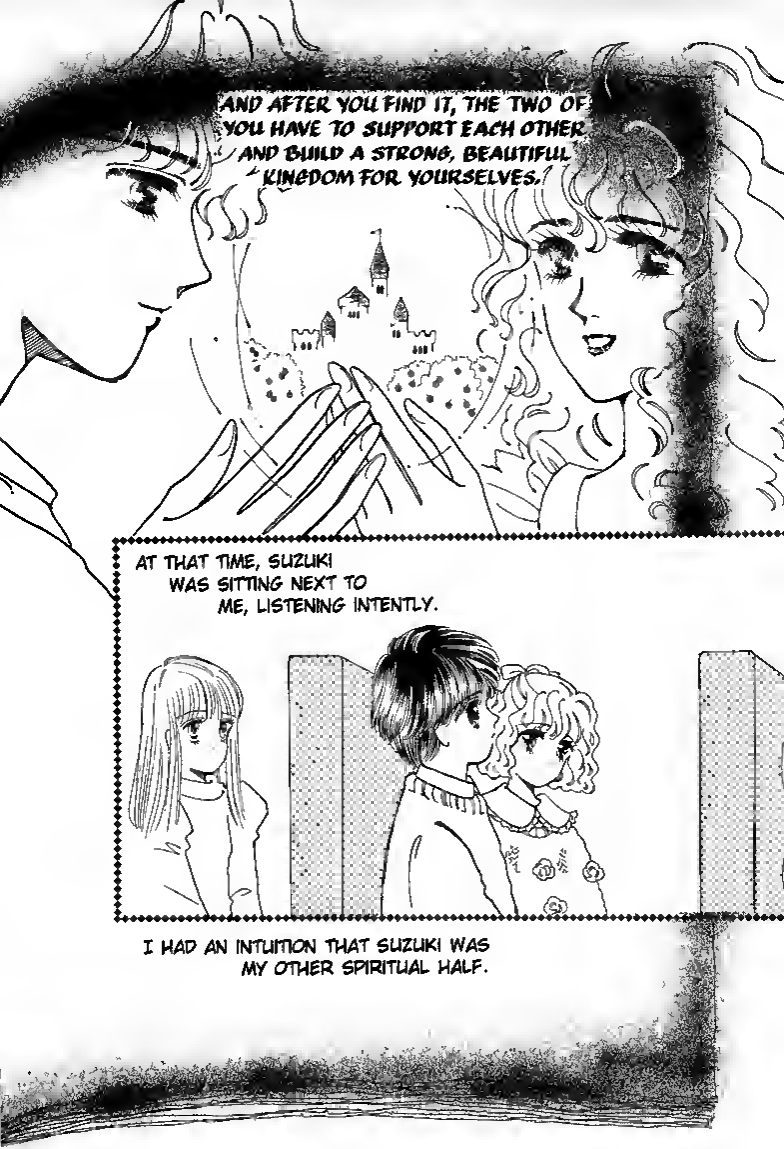
WHAT?

...OKOK
THEY'RE WEARING MATCHING SCARVES.
THEY LOOK GOOD TOGETHER.
HA HA...

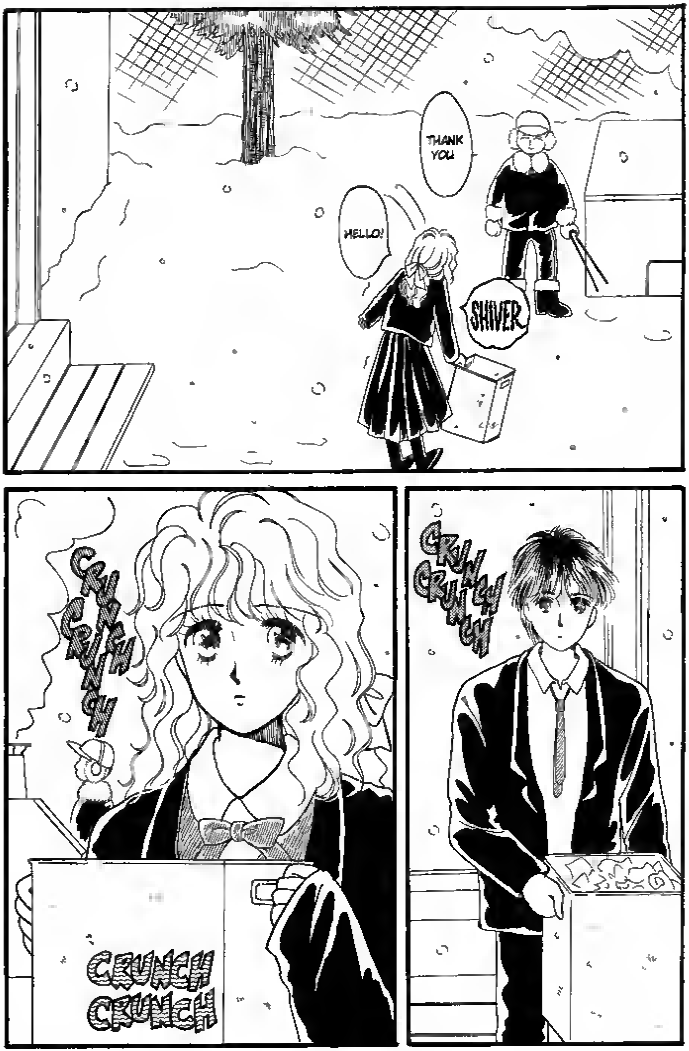
IT'S A BLIZZARD.
I HOPE SCHOOL IS CANCELED TOMORROW.

IT WAS ALMOST TEN YEARS AGO...
IN THAT CHURCH, I HEARD IT AT SUNDAY SCHOOL.
YOUR HEART IS THE KINGDOM IN WHICH GOD DWELLS. NO ONE CAN HURT IT.


YOUR SOUL IS SPLIT IN HALF
BEFORE YOU ARE BORN,
DIVIDED BETWEEN
BOY AND GIRL.
AS YOU GET OLDER,
YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR
OTHER HALF BY YOURSELF.


AND AFTER YOU FIND IT, THE TWO OF YOU HAVE TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND BUILD A STRONG, BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM FOR YOURSELVES.
AT THAT TIME, SUZUKI WAS SITTING NEXT TO ME, LISTENING INTENTLY.
I HAD AN INTUITION THAT SUZUKI WAS MY OTHER SPIRITUAL HALF.

THERE WAS NO REASON FOR IT. AT THAT TIME--
--IT JUST CAME FROM MY HEART.
BUT I WONDER IF GOD REALLY DOES LIVE IN THE KINGDOM IN MY HEART?
BECAUSE I'VE BEEN HURT DEEPLY NOW.


THANK YOU
HELLO!
SHIVER
CRUNCH CRUNCH
CRUNCH CRUNCH
CRUNCH CRUNCH

CLANG
SLIP SLIP
SORRY.
FWMP
OH, NO. I'M SORRY. I DID IT ON PURPOSE BUT...

SWEEP SWEEP
WOW! THERE'S SNOW ALL OVER YOUR UNIFORM. SHALL I ROLL YOU AROUND IN THE SNOW SOME MORE AND MAKE YOU INTO A SNOWMAN?
SAT
WHAT? YOU'RE NOT MAD?

MATSUSHITA, YOU ALWAYS LOOK SO UPSET.
YOU MAKE THAT ANGRY FACE, LIKE A DEMON.
OH, THANKS.
HA HA... DO I?
I FEEL SAD AND MISERABLE, BUT I CAN FINALLY SMILE AT HIM.
THIS IS PRETTY FUNNY.

I'M SORRY. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
WHAT!? I FINALLY SEE YOU SMILE AFTER ALL THIS TIME AND NOW WHAT?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. LEAVE ME ALONE.
WHEN YOU CRY IN THE SNOW--
--YOUR FACE FREEZES.
SHAKE
SEE! YOUR FACE IS FREEZING.
CRACKLE
YIKES, MY FACE IS FROZEN
WHAT AM I DOING?
I WAS JUST JOKING AROUND
MATSUSHITA, YOU KNOW WHAT?

YOUR HEART IS A KINGDOM WHICH GOD WILL PROTECT.
SO NO ONE CAN HURT YOU.
WHAT?
PUT
YOU DON'T SEE FOREIGNERS VERY OFTEN HERE IN THE COUNTRY
HA, HA. I USED TO GO TO CHURCH WHEN I WAS A KID.
I LIKED TO LISTEN TO THE PRIEST. I'M NOT A CHRISTIAN BUT...
WE'VE BOTH REMEMBERED THE SAME THING OVER THE YEARS.

I THINK I MIGHT HAVE HEARD THE SAME THING BEFORE.
REALLY?
HE DOESN'T REMEMBER THAT I WAS SITTING NEXT TO HIM THAT DAY.
BUT I'M HAPPY JUST KNOWING WE REMEMBER THE SAME THING.

IN THE KINGDOM OF MY HEART--
--NO ONE CAN HURT ME.
SUZUKI TOLD ME THAT.
I'M GOING TO START BELIEVING IT AGAIN.
EVEN IF I SEE SUZUKI AND HONDA WALKING TOGETHER.

° OF COURSE, MY HEART IS THROBBING WITH PAIN BUT...
I'LL BE FINE.
I'LL BE FINE.
I'LL BE FINE.
MATSUSHITA, DID YOU DO YOUR CLASSICS HOMEWORK?
YEAH, I JUST COPIED THE REFERENCES.

×OMAKE×

HELLO!

THIS STORY WAS MY FAVORITE! I GUESS SOME PEOPLE WONDER WHETHER THIS STORY WAS BASED ON ANY SPECIFIC RELIGION. IT WAS NOT. IT WAS INSPIRED BY SOME RELIGIONS AND NEW AGE IDEAS, MUSIC, AND JOSEPH MURPHY'S BOOKS. WHEN I MADE THIS STORY I LIKED A GROUP CALLED TNT. ONE SONG'S TITLE WAS "INTUITION." THE SONG SAID, "THE HEART IS YOUR KINGDOM," SO I MADE THE TITLE "KIMI NO OKOKU," WHICH MEANS "YOUR KINGDOM" IN JAPANESE. ALSO, WHEN I MADE THIS STORY, I LIVED IN A GIRLS' DORMITORY WITH A CHURCH ON THE BASEMENT FLOOR. MY ROOM WAS ON THE NINTH FLOOR, AND THE CHURCH WAS UNDER ME .. I FELT "SORRY" SOMEHOW. I SOMETIMES VISITED THAT CHURCH ON SUNDAY... I HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON, IN THE NEXT BOOK!

TOMOKO TANIGUCHI

I REPEAT HIS WORDS OVER AND OVER AGAIN LIKE A SPELL.

YOUR HEART IS A KINGDOM WHICH GOD WILL PROTECT.

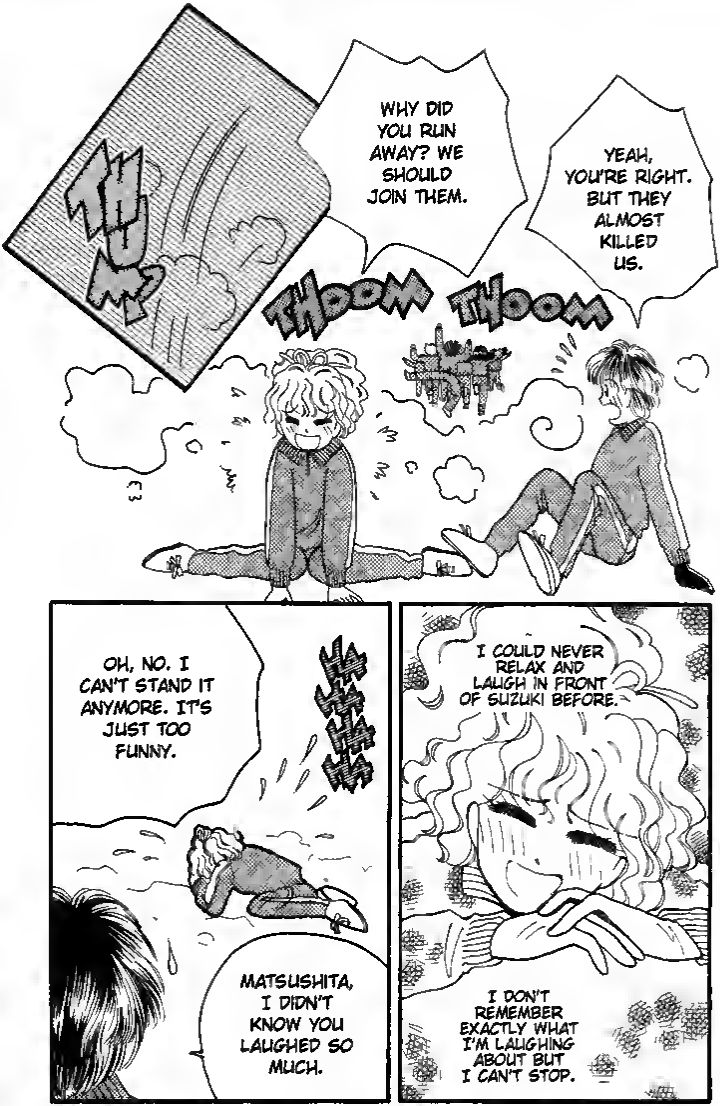
NO ONE CAN HURT YOU.

THE GIRLS ARE HAVING A SOCCER GAME IN THE SNOW.
I WANT TO PLAY IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN KARATE CLASS
*SNOW SOCCER IS JUST KICKING THE BALL IN THE SNOW THERE ARE NO RULES IN THIS GAME

STUPID
HA HA HA
KOKO, YOU'RE NOT THE GOALKEEPER. DON'T CATCH THE BALL.
HEY, TEACH, WE WANT TO PLAY SNOW SOCCER.
UMM
BOO BOO
IF THEIR TEACHER SAYS IT'S OKAY, YOU CAN PLAY.
YAAAAY!!!
OH, NO! THE BOYS ARE GOING TO PLAY US.
YIKES!

YEAH!! YEAH!!
HUFF PUFF
HAHAHA. YOUR NOSE IS RED. YOU LOOK DUMB.
WHAT?! YOUR CHEEKS ARE RED TOO. YOU COUNTRY GIRL!

WE ALL LIVE IN THE COUNTRY. CITY BOYS AND GIRLS DON'T PLAY SNOW SOCCER.
HA HA HA HA HA.
HA HA HA.
YEAH!! YEAH!!
© RIYOE YOKOYAMA
THEY'RE COMING TOWARDS US.
YEAH!! YEAH!!
HIYAH! RUN! THEY'RE GONNA RUN OVER US.


THUMP
WHY DID YOU RUN AWAY? WE SHOULD JOIN THEM.
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT THEY ALMOST KILLED US.
THOOM THOOM
OH, NO. I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE. IT'S JUST TOO FUNNY.
MATSUSHITA, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU LAUGHED SO MUCH.
I COULD NEVER RELAX AND LAUGH IN FRONT OF SUZUKI BEFORE.
I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT I'M LAUGHING ABOUT BUT I CAN'T STOP.

MY OTHER HALF WHO WILL SUPPORT THE KINGDOM OF MY HEART HAS TO BE--

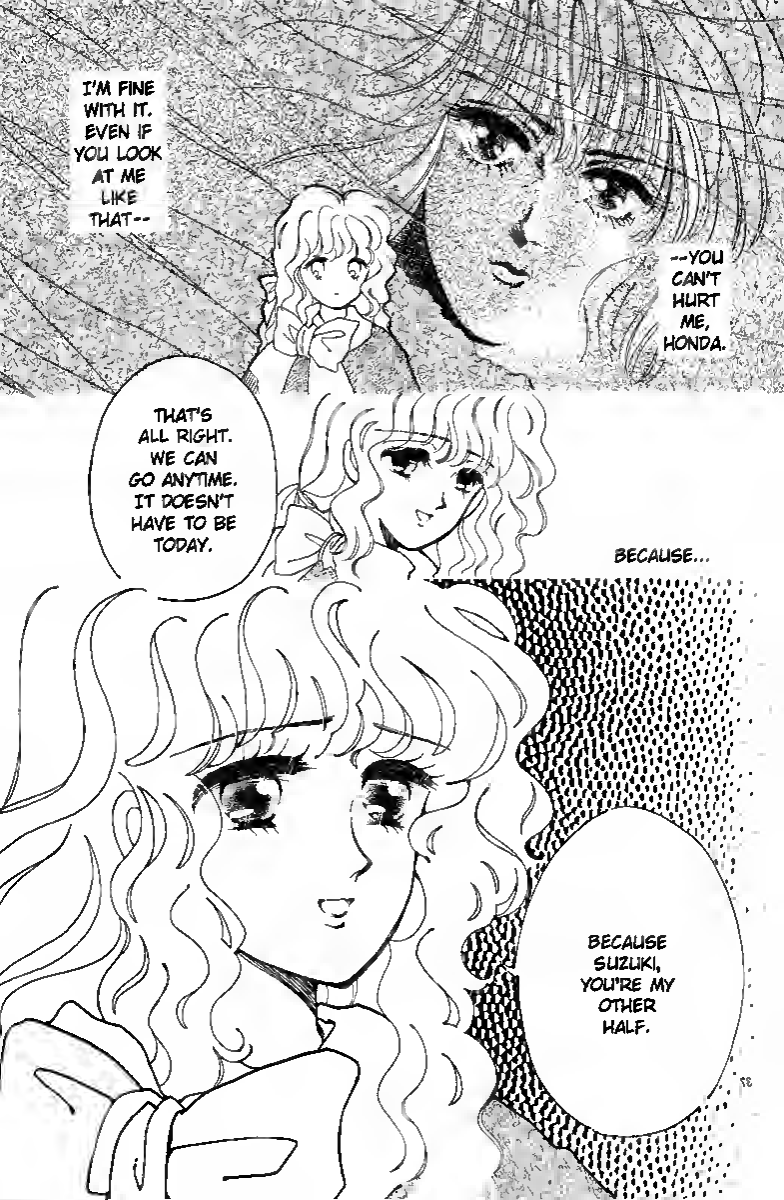
--SUZUKI.

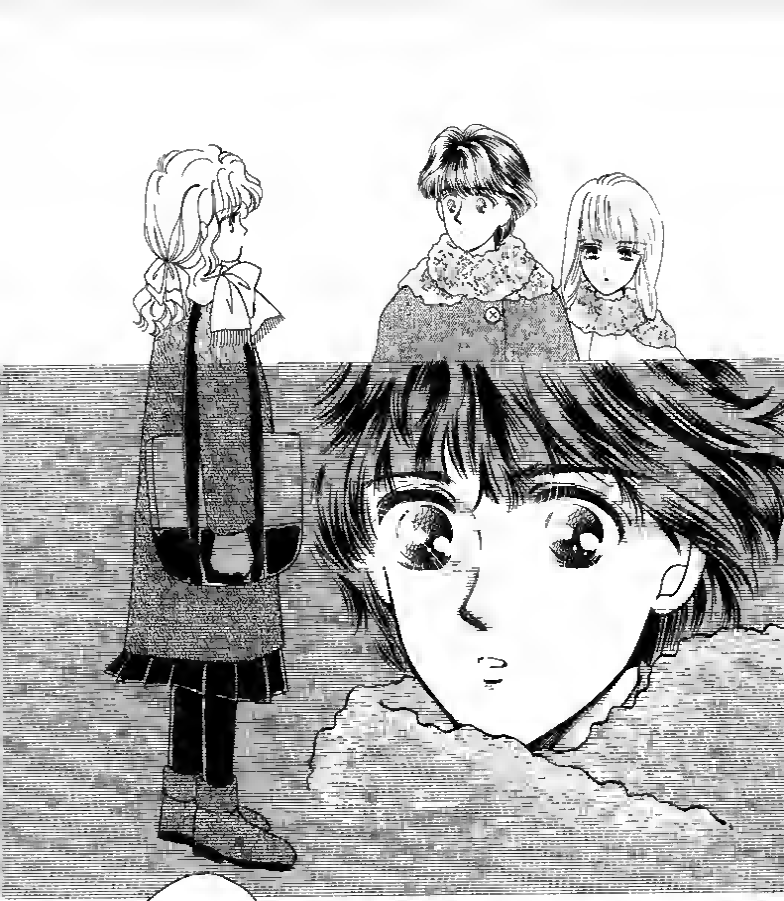
SORRY. WE STILL HAVE TO GO BACK TO HOMEROOM. WE JUST HAD GYM.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR ME.
BUT YOU'LL BE FINISHED SOON, RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT...
WE JUST HAVE TO CLEAN THE ROOM AND...
OKAY, SEE YOU.
YOU'RE A LIAR. IT'S NOT YOUR TURN TO CLEAN UP.
SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE LOVES ME, AND GAVE ME THIS.
I THOUGHT IT WAS COOL.

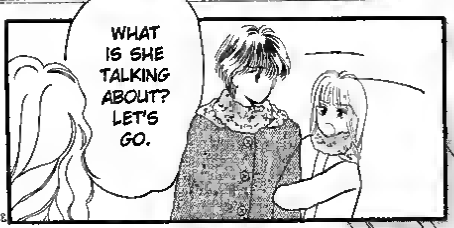
I ACCEPTED IT INSTANTLY BECAUSE I WANTED A CUTE GIRLFRIEND.
WELL, LET'S GO HOME TOGETHER AND STOP AND GET SOME OYAKI.
I'M GOING TOO.
I'M GOING TO THE BATHROOM. CAN YOU WAIT A MINUTE?

WHAT?
HMMMM... SWEET BEAN OR CHOCOLATE TODAY? THE CREAM IS GOOD TOO.
I'M TALKING ABOUT TYPES OF OYAKI!
IF YOU MEAN REAL OYAKI, IT'S GOTTA BE SWEET BEAN.
WHAT? I THINK CREAM IS ALSO CONSIDERED REAL OYAKI. BUT CHEESE AND CHOCOLATE AREN'T.

I THOUGHT YOU HAD TO CLEAN THE CLASS-ROOM.
WHATEVER. SO YOU CAN GO HOME WITH ME, RIGHT?
WEAR YOUR SCARF. IT'S SNOWING OUTSIDE.
SORRY, MATSUSHITA! TELL THEM I'M SORRY. NEXT TIME, OKAY?


I'M FINE WITH IT. EVEN IF YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT--
--YOU CAN'T HURT ME, HONDA.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. WE CAN GO ANYTIME. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE TODAY.
BECAUSE...
BECAUSE SUZUKI, YOU'RE MY OTHER HALF.




WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT? LET'S GO.

SORRY, HUH? KOKO, WHERE IS HE?
WHAT!? SHOCK!!
HE WENT HOME WITH HONDA.
WHAT?!
OTHER BOYS WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEANT--
BUT I TOLD HIM HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM.

--BUT I'M SURE THAT SUZUKI UNDERSTANDS.

HEY, LET'S GO! WE HAVE TO GO GET OYAKI.
WHAT'S HAPPENED? TELL ME!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
お焼き
OYAKI
HOT HOT
CHOMP CHOMP I COULDN'T GO HOME WITHOUT BUYING SWEET BEAN AND CREAM.
I GOT BOTH TOO.

WHAT?
GOOD LUCK! WE GOTTA GO.
TOK

I GAVE HER BACK HER SCARF.
I TOLD HER THAT I COULDN'T GO OUT WITH HER ANYMORE.
YOU MUST BE COLD. YOUR BODY AND YOUR HEART.
HERE YOU GO. HAVE AN OYAKI!
YOU GOT " TWO!
A WHILE AGO, I HEARD A RUMOR FROM SOMEONE THAT YOU LIKED ME.
GRAMP

BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT, BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS LOOKED ANGRY AT ME.
I WAS DIS-APPOINTED.
WHEN I WAS IN CHURCH THAT DAY--
--I WISHED YOU WERE MY OTHER HALF.

YOU REMEMBER THAT I WAS SITTING NEXT TO YOU...DON'T YOU?
HA HA HA...
The END

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